

TWELVE SERMONS.

BY

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TWELVE SERMONS.

I.

GRACE ABOUNDING OVER SIN.

“ But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”
(Romans v. 20.)

IN whatever direction we push our inquiries, we are soon arrested by a wall of adamant, high as heaven, deep as hell, beyond which we cannot pass. We now see through a glass, darkly; and he who will not accept facts unless he understands their philosophy, and, disdaining hints and glimpses of the truth, demands to be furnished a complete and harmonious system of the universe, must grope and stumble in hopeless confusion. There is not to man a darker mystery than sin, and its fruit of shame, sorrow, death. Why there ever came into the universe this blot upon its glory, this discord amid its harmonies, this poisonous growth in the luxuriance of its gardens, this miasma in the purity and sweet-ness of its atmosphere, is a question which has baffled the curious research of all past generations, and threatens to remain an unsolved enigma to the end of time. Yet sin is here, for whatever cause per-

mitted, in our world, in our community, in our own lives, a reality not to be doubted; and with sin its gloomy train of death and unnumbered woes. If there seem to be a slight lifting of the veil behind which the fair and majestic form of truth is concealed, a rift in the clouds through which we get a glance at the sunlight and calm, lofty heaven beyond, as we learn that the sin of man becomes the occasion of manifesting the grace of God which brings salvation, and of enhancing in the end the happiness of believers, then we are fiercely assailed by questions: Is not sin a good thing, since it sets forth the divine glory? Shall God find fault with what serves to illustrate the fullness of his grace? Shall we not continue in sin, that grace may abound? In answer, I do not attempt a philosophy of sin and salvation, but affirm a few truths in which reason and revelation agree. Sin is an evil, bitter, accursed thing; always and everywhere; loathed and hated by God; for which the creature alone is responsible and deserves punishment, and which no argument, no pleading, however specious, can prove to accord with the good pleasure of God. Nevertheless, the riches of grace in Christ Jesus are shown forth in his victory over sin and death which he drags captive and fettered behind his chariot wheels, and

the height to which sin has risen in our world is the index of that great love which not only reaches, but overflows, this our towering guilt: the greatness of the ruin marks the greatness of the redemption.

This truth is not without analogies in nature. When the sun has struggled through the lowering storm, he paints upon the black clouds, in their sullen retreat, a bow of peerless beauty, the symbol of grace, hope, and beauty. When the day has sunk, and darkness rushes after, the myriad stars of heaven glisten, opening to our minds some view of the wide spaces of the universe and the magnificence of God's material empire which the light had hidden. When the earth begins to feel the chill of autumnal winds and frosts, the woods put on a robe of mingling russet, scarlet, and every intermediate hue, richer and more pleasing to the eye than the uniform green of its summer foliage. When the ocean has been swept by a tempest which now subsides, and the sun smiles again upon the scene, the swell and whitecaps of the billows present a more majestic spectacle than the smooth expanse of an unruffled sea. Thus do sin, sorrow, death, gloomy as they are, display in richer variety, in greater glory, the grace of Christ which on such elements works its transforming wonders,

I will attempt to show how man's sin is made to illustrate the goodness of God, enhance the happiness of the saved, develop a new phase in the beauty of holiness, and increase the strength and ardor of love to the Redeemer.

I. By occasion of sin God is manifested in a most glorious and engaging view.

He looked with approving love on the beauty of creation in its early morn, but now that smile is turned into pitying tenderness. With boundless profusion he had strewed the richest gifts; but when these were rejected, beneficence changed to mercy, and the hands that wrought and garnished the worlds were nailed to the accursed tree.

To compare heavenly things with earthly, I think of Gabriel standing in the presence of God as of a son born and reared in the palace of a great king, amid affluence and splendor. Never has a wish of his heart been denied. At certain hours of each day he is called into the presence of his royal father, receives his caresses, and is taught lessons of wisdom and virtue. He grows in admiration of the king, and no thought of disrespect or disobedience ever enters his mind. At a distance from the palace, in a hut, low, squalid, tottering, live a family who, by vice and improvidence, have brought themselves to shame and want, and by crime have

deserved the dungeon. It becomes known to the son—who hitherto has never gone beyond the royal gardens and the grounds of the courtiers that lie around, who has seen nothing of vice and wretchedness—that his father, without retinue or pomp, has visited this hovel, sat among the degraded inmates, persuaded them to a virtuous course, freely pardoned their past, and assured them of his continued watchfulness and care. Does there not break upon that boy a strange light, a new, a nobler, a more touching aspect of his father's heart, a deep and tender affection because of this magnanimity, which had not been called forth by the unbroken kindness that he had ever shown to his own happy household? And if that son were sent with a message of love and comfort to those poor wretches, he would feel, methinks, in kind, though not in degree, as Gabriel felt when he left the court of heaven to enter the humble home of the virgin Mary at Nazareth, and told her from God of the Saviour who should soon be born.

The redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, including the means and the result, his sufferings and the glory that shall follow, may be the most wonderful chapter in the history of the universe; angels, swift of wing, may have paused in delight over Eden, the beautiful garden, cradle of a new

race, admiring the goodness of the Creator and rejoicing in the happiness of man; but the rugged cross on Calvary, scarred by the nails which were driven through the quivering flesh of an august and sinless victim, and stained with his innocent blood, excels in interest and glory all the trees of paradise. In heaven they beheld and worshiped the Son of God, brightness of the Father's glory, express image of his person, head over all principalities, lord of all worlds; but when they saw him humbled to human flesh, to poverty, sorrow, service; when they saw him go forth into this wilderness that he might seek and save the lost, and lay down his life for them, give his own flesh and blood to be the meat and drink of his enemies now and hereby reconciled; when he who knew no sin was made sin for us; when he was made a curse to redeem us from the curse of the law; when from his lips there broke that wail which seems to gather into itself all possible woe and desolation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" when the guilt of the world from the first act of disobedience, the beginning of our woe, to their sin who cried, "Crucify him!" and thenceforward through all ages until he shall come again, the sins of ignorance and the sins of willfulness, heathenish vice and crime in all their foul and cruel hideousness,

and the more aggravated offenses of Christian lands against the mercy of the Son of man, met upon the head of this spotless Lamb, and was purged by this most costly and precious sacrifice, then higher rose the adoring wonder, with a sublinier song the arches of heaven rang, voices that had been ever clear and full and strong with joy gained a sweeter tone of tender sympathy, and harps whose strings had known no other strain than of simple praise and gladness increased their compass to embrace all notes of fear and hope, of wrath deserved and mercy shown, of battle fought and triumph won; and they who had sung, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they were and are created,” now added: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.”

II. I have said that sin through grace is made not only to show forth God’s abundant mercy, but also to enhance the blessedness of the saved.

Nothing is more familiar to us than the law of contrast by which loss, grief, and danger add to joy.

In the far north of ancient Scandinavia, where the sun disappears for forty successive days, as the

time drew near (a time they had no means of measuring with accuracy) for the long night to change to glorious day, some of the inhabitants climbed to the top of the highest mountains, and waited and watched with straining eyes, that they might catch the first beams of the rising disk, and shout the news to those below. So rejoiced Mary and Joseph, Zacharias and Elizabeth, the shepherds of the plain and the Magi of the East, aged Simeon and Anna the prophetess, when upon the hilltops they saw the beginning splendor of the Sun of righteousness as he rose with healing in his wings after a night of gloom and terror unbroken since it first settled upon the sinning pair in Eden. Their joy must spread, until every valley and the darkest regions of earth shall be visited by the Day-spring from on high.

If you are a mother, and have watched with eyes of love the growing charms of a tender babe; if one day the child fell sick, and your heart was pierced as you heard his moans and cries without power to give relief; if you saw the cheek grow thinner and paler, the eye more sunken and dimmed, until you seemed to shiver with the chill of the grave into which he must be lowered; if at that crisis there began an evident improvement in every symptom, and soon strength returned to the wasted

form and bloom to the wan face—then you know something of joy and love deepened by grief and fear. If you were ever a soldier, and stood in the ranks through a hotly-contested day to which it seemed there would come no end; if, while your brigade was drawn up in line of battle, or marched and countermarched, you heard the booming of guns, the crash of shells, the rattle of musketry, the hiss of bullets, which told the progress of the fight hidden by dense woods and intervening hills; if there were brief pauses more terrible than the roar of action, and the battle now receded, now drew nearer; if you saw streams of the wounded roll back and shattered regiments retire to be relieved by fresher troops; if, at times, the fire of the enemy reached the spot where you stood, and again you were plunged into the thick of the strife; if an uncertain sound as of distant shouting was borne to your perplexed ear, and it grew nearer, more distinct, more joyous, until you felt sure that it was lifted by your comrades, and it was caught up in turn by your own brigade—the shout of victory over a broken, routed, fleeing foe—then you understand how joy can be doubled, yea, increased a hundred-fold, by doubt and danger. If you ever lived on a dangerous coast where the breakers roll high, and mixed with an anxious crowd who gathered

there to gaze on a ship in distress ; if a few bold and noble fellows sprang into a boat, pulled for life the oars, and dared the tempestuous deep ; if that boat were now seen trembling on the tall crest of a wave, and then hid itself in the deep trough of the sea ; if they reached the unhappy vessel ere it was a total wreck, received the crew who had abandoned themselves to despair, and returned in safety to the shore amid wild huzzas of applause and congratulation—then you know that with the height of the peril rises the joy of the rescue. If you are a father, and have a son dear to you as the fruit of your loins, doubly dear for his mother's sake ; if you have seen that boy grow strange to his own home and familiar to the haunts of vice ; if, for his sake, you have sat up in sleepless anguish or groaned upon your bed through weary nights ; if you have trembled, as you heard steps approaching your door, lest men were bringing to you his corpse or some story of his shame and woe ; if you have feared that you must go down to your grave broken-hearted, and have wished that even by the sacrifice of life you might snatch him from the ruin which could not be long postponed ; if that boy has since hung upon your breast and wept ; if you have seen him penitent, reformed, affectionate, restored to virtue and to home—then you know that

after sin and sorrow may come a thrilling joy which else could not have been conceived. How deep the joy of a sinner saved! How bright heaven's glory to the spirit snatched and raised from the horror of the pit! How sweet the song of angels over one sinner that repenteth! How full the satisfaction of the father over the son who was dead, and is alive; was lost, and is found!

III. I have also said that the grace of Christ presents a phase of piety, rather I might say manifold phases, a most pleasing variety, which cannot be found among the unfallen spirits of heaven.

In illustration, I mention the faith of Abraham, the chastity of Joseph, the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, the repentance of David, the courage of Elijah, the temperance of Daniel, the zeal of Paul, the loving spirit of John, besides many types of female excellence, all of which are possible only amid the disorders of our world.

What can be more heroic than the struggle of a man, through the grace of God, to subdue the sin that began at his birth and has grown with his growth, habits to which years have added strength, the powerful solicitations of appetite, passion, and self-interest, and the evil influence of the world? He falls a hundred times, yet rises again; he is sore bruised and faint, yet renews the battle; the

fleshly mind, beaten down, assails him afresh, and by surprise wins a vantage ground from which it must be driven; he sinks into the slough of despond, and is threatened with being swallowed up in the deep mire ere he can reach firm ground; a sudden rush of evil thoughts sweeps him along as though he had no will, no power to resist, and he must break from their captivity; floods of temptation roll over his head, and scarcely can he hope with his strongest efforts to stem their fury, and regain the shore. His very weakness adds to the moral grandeur of the struggle and of that ultimate victory with which he is scarcely saved. Inspiration tells us, in brief and obscure terms, of war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought and prevailed not. The genius of Milton, expanding these hints, has imagined the bright legions by thousands and by millions ranged for fight, covering a province ten times the length of earth, invulnerable, impenetrably armed; and confronting them the equal hosts of darkness, subject indeed to wounds and pain, yet spirits vital in every part which cannot but by annihilating die:

Long time in even scale

The battle hung.

At length the Son of God his flaming chariot

Ascended ; at his right hand Victory
Sat eagle-wing'd ; beside him hung his bow
And quiver with three-bolted thunder stor'd. . . .

Far off his coming shone.

. . . They, astonish'd, all resistance lost,
All courage : down their idle weapons dropt ;
O'er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode,
Of thrones and mighty seraphim prostrate,
That wish'd the mountains now might be again
Thrown on them as a shelter from his ire.

But sublimer than the poet's vision is the secret, solitary struggle of a feeble, sinful soul, through not days, but years, of infirmity, suffering, and well-nigh despair, to escape the subtle adversary who lies in wait or assaults him in fierce fight; to throw off the dominion of sense and follow the standard of faith, lifted aloft, but oft obscured, oft seeming to be lost ; to mortify his own clamorous lusts, regulate his own tumultuous passions, subject to the supreme authority of God his own perverse will, and count as naught the honor and reproach, the golden bribes and threatened beggary, the pleasures and pains, of earth.

There are scenes in the history of grace on which the angels may well delight to gaze: The beautiful Queen Esther risking her life for the safety of her people; the widow of Sarepta giving to the prophet her last cakes of oil and meal in the

famine ; the women who ministered to Jesus during the days of his tribulation and visited his tomb with spices by the dawn of the third day ; the women who ministered to his saints, and were willing to lay down their necks for the love they bore his servant ; Dorcas, full of good works and almsdeeds ; the widowed mother on whose sole care are thrown a family of children to be fed and taught and trained ; she bows her knee in humble, trembling prayer for grace to help her weakness in this hour of need, and patiently, gratefully, with uncomplaining and unselfish toil and self-denial, rears them for virtue and for heaven ; the delicate maiden who forgets the timidity of her sex, and crucifies every worldly feeling, that she may wait around the couch of sickness and moisten with cooling water the fever of infected lips.

And if envy were possible in heaven, an archangel, even Gabriel himself, might feel its touch as he sees a sainted man, infirm of body, sensitive of heart, forego the dreams of earthly ambition, and rend the bleeding ties of friendship, country, home, that, in a distant and a savage land, for the love of Jesus and the love of souls, in hunger and in thirst, in sickness unattended, and in hourly danger, without one voice or face to cheer, he may toil on to the

end of life, teaching those dark, rude heathen the story of the cross.

IV. Finally, the debt of sin which grace cancels, the fear of hell from which grace delivers, as they increase our obligation, bind us to God by a new tie, and raise higher the fervor of our grateful love.

In imagination I go back to the garden in the East which sin had not tainted, and, with Milton, view the happy pair “at the grateful coming on of evening mild.”

Both stood,
Both turned, and under open sky ador'd
The God that made both sky, air, earth, and heaven,
Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe,
And starry pole.

Again, when

Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl, . . .
Lowly they bowed, adoring, and began
Their orisons:
These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty. Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair. Thyself how wondrous then!

I ascend to heaven, and hear the angels, who rest not day and night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” I revisit this now sin-stricken world, and

my eye falls upon a man, like myself, whose heart seems about to break with the love too full for its weakness, yet too slight for the merit of the Saviour by whose grace he has just been disenthralled from the yoke of Satan, and at whose feet he sits clothed and in his right mind ; and he repeats, “ Is not this a brand plucked from the fire ? ” I enter the house of Simon, and a woman, speechless, with crimson cheeks and swollen eyes, bending low, her face veiled by her streaming hair, washes with her fast-falling tears the feet of Jesus, and wipes them with the loosened hair, and anoints and kisses them ; and I hear him say : “ Her sins, which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much : but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” I enter paradise, not now in the company of an angel whose familiar home it is, not of a veteran saint, some Samuel dedicated to God from birth and brought up in the service of the tabernacle, thence transferred to the temple not made with hands, but of that thief whose crimes were at last overtaken with due punishment from man, who has just hung upon the cross, and caught with an ear which death was closing, but hope for a moment quickened, the sweet promise of Jesus, the last words the malefactor heard on earth, almost the last words the lips of the Son of man uttered ;

and now, the very same day, his eyes opening in paradise see not its rich glories, see not its shining throngs, but search out and are riveted upon his Saviour, and he is endeavoring to convince himself that this is not a glorious dream, so confused is he by the sudden change, the angry cries of Calvary being so soon succeeded by the melodies of the angels and the tortures of crucifixion by the bliss of heaven. I hear him speaking to himself: “Yes, this is what he told me, ‘This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.’” I see before the rainbow-circled throne a company which no man can number. They cannot claim a virgin purity, but have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; they are here, not by the gift of creation or a covenant of works, but as heirs through grace of a purchased possession, the price being the life of the Son of man; they have come up from every land, kindred, tribe, out of great tribulation. There is Peter, who wept bitterly over his fall, and, being converted, went forth to strengthen his brethren; there is Paul, once a blasphemer and persecutor, who became a chosen vessel to bear far off the grace of Christ; there are a chosen seed raised to God out of the very stones of heathen brutishness; there are purified and exalted spirits from all classes of society,

wreckers on the coast and the rude sons of the sea, serfs of the soil, colliers from the pit, delvers from the mine; there are Bunyan, John Newton, and a multitude of hardened and profane wretches whose lips were touched with holy fire to preach the word. And now these beggars of earth are wearing crowns in heaven, these sin-soiled children of the world stand as peers among the angels in their sun-bright vestures; and I seem to hear a song sweeter than that which greeted earth as she shot into her orbit fresh and glowing from her Maker's hands, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, "Death is swallowed up in victory!" As when the sun goes forth in the greatness of his strength and in his glorious apparel, the shades of night are swallowed up in his overspreading splendor, "Death is swallowed up in victory!" As when the clash of timbrels and the happy voices of Moses and all the sons of Jacob, of Miriam and all the daughters of Israel, rose above the thunder of the sea which broke upon the shore, and the proud waves rolled over Pharaoh's hosts, the glittering chariot, the horse and his rider, the spear and shield, "Death is swallowed up in victory!" As when the fatted calf was spread in the hall of feasting, and lively music and the dancers' feet kept time to the joy which beat in every heart,

and the younger son in the best robe and with the ring upon his finger walked amid the happy guests, all want and care and tears were forgotten in the fullness of his honors, “Death is swallowed up in victory!” I see Death, the dread king, whom no force could resist nor skill evade, scornful of every bribe and pitiless to every plea; around him gather his mighty lieutenants, War, Famine, and Pestilence, and a countless host of accidents, feuds, assassinations, and diseases which wasted the human race and filled the earth with ceaseless wails; at the coming of him who is the firstborn from the dead and the Resurrection and the Life, they tremble, they flee, they plunge into the bottomless pit of darkness; and from the multitude of saints who are alive and are changed into the likeness of their glorious Lord, and from the vaster multitude who slept in the dust, but now awake clad in the garments of incorruption and immortality, there bursts forth the triumphal shout, “Death is swallowed up in victory!” “For where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

II.

GLORYING ONLY IN THE LORD.

“Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” (Jeremiah ix. 23, 24.)

WISDOM, might, riches—these three constitute all the goodliness and glory of man, which Isaiah the prophet and Peter the apostle compare to the flower of the field.

In respect to wisdom, the mind is at first a blank. By slow and laborious processes knowledge is gained, and the intellect developed and trained. The present state of enlightenment is the result of the toils of centuries, our age being heir to the tedious accretions of all preceding generations. The utter ignorance and imbecility of our infancy, the slow steps of our education, our indebtedness to the researches and instructions of other men, rebuke the vanity of our fancied wisdom.

The vast majority of mankind are still sunk, as
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they have ever been, in gross darkness. They have little knowledge, little thought, beyond the few things which are essential to the maintenance and comfort of their physical life. This is true of all men in savage, of large numbers in civilized, lands. That our boasted enlightenment is due to the accident of our birth in a particular century, country, caste, should lower our pride. It is a gift, like the peacock's feathers, the nightingale's song, the rose's bloom, the diamond's brightness.

No single mind is able to contain, much less to collect by original investigation, all the learning of the world. Life is too brief to gather all knowledge; if protracted beyond the usual term, memory fails, the mind loses its vigor, the infirmities of the flesh forbid study. Men must confine themselves chiefly to special branches if they would be proficient.

Yet how small is the sum total of human knowledge, though it exceed the capacity of any single intellect! What portion of the two eternities—the eternal past, the eternal future—has man subjected to his search? The historian soon reaches the twilight of the nations in which wild, confused, incredible legends are substituted for authentic facts, and this twilight deepens into thick night, except the scant information of the books of Moses. Geology

hints, indeed, at vast periods during which the earth was undergoing changes, uninhabited by a living thing, or inhabited by orders of animals now extinct; but so little can we learn of the immense cycles that it only reveals our ignorance, and reproves the presumption that thinks to discover the secrets of the past. “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.” And beyond the beginning, not of man merely, but of this globe, and her satellite, and her sister planets, and her kingly sun, and the fixed stars, and the milky way; beyond the birth of light, matter, created spirits, and time—whether measured by the revolutions of the spheres or the succession of finite thought—what can you tell, what conjecture, concerning the eternity of the sole existence of the I Am? Now look in front, and tell me what does the keenest inspection determine about the eternity to come, the duration which flows on continuously from the present moment, briefer than the dropping of one sand through the second-glass?

It is the smallest fragment of time, therefore, whose records we are permitted to examine; so also is it the smallest fragment of space. Travellers and voyagers have not completed the exploration of our own globe. But what a shred of the

universe is this planet! True, the exact science of mathematics and the aid of highly improved optical glasses have brought us into a sort of acquaintance with worlds and systems surpassing number, with our neighbor and attendant the moon, with stars inconceivably remote, inconceivably vast; yet what we can learn, even of the nearest, is as nothing. They are almost as unknown, as unintelligible to the most learned astronomer as to the peasant who thinks them points of light to spangle the firmament. And the illimitable space which incloses all these visible orbs as the ocean incloses an island, and stretches far away with a disproportion of extent to which the superior size of the earth over one grain of dust forms no comparison —what worlds, what intelligences, what events, what displays of the divine perfections, are included in this invisible expanse, must remain beyond our guess.

Within such low and narrow bounds we are imprisoned. But there are other barriers not less insuperable. We can learn, we can inquire little of the nature of the nearest and most familiar objects. We discuss the properties of matter; but what is matter? We classify living things; but what is life? The subtlest analysis cannot detect its secret in grain or flower, in beast or man.

Force, cause, volition—what know we of these? The laws of affinity, gravitation, and the like are words on our lips; but why do bodies attract one another, or whence these special affinities? Who can explain the reasons of the distinctions in lifeless matter, the products of the soil, and the orders of animals? Light, heat, electricity—what are they? There is not a worm which feeds on a plant, not a plant which grows out of the dust, not a particle of dust, which does not baffle the profoundest scholar. Nor are we less ignorant of ourselves, of our own vital principle, of the power which makes the heart beat, the muscles contract, the nerves feel, of the mode of the action of the senses and brain, of the mode in which the mind is possessed of the knowledge of the outer world or in which the will controls the movements of the body. Of mind itself, of our own spiritual essence —how profound our ignorance! How fragmentary our largest learning, how shallow our deepest philosophy, how dark our wisest scholarship! Outside a very scant space, man looks forth in despair ever to know, at least in this life.

Within the province of human research, uncertainty, error, imperfection abound. Men of science are continually correcting the mistakes of their predecessors. Hypotheses still occupy the

place of ascertained truth. Able partisans fiercely dispute over facts and theories. The history of modern and civilized nations is incomplete and doubtful. In every department of knowledge we find confusion, an insufficient collection and testing of facts, conjectural and conflicting speculations. Therefore let not the wise man glory in his wisdom. “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.”

Let us take wisdom in the sense of skill, sagacity, judgment, practical discretion. Shall man glory in his wisdom? The history of mankind is the reiteration from age to age of the same story of blindness, folly, madness. They will not be taught by the painful experience of past centuries, nor profited by their own sufferings, the penalty of past follies, but continue, incorrigible, the race through the long lapse of generations, individuals to the close of the longest life. Asia, Africa, South America, Oceanica—are they wise? Select this enlightened age and the most advanced countries of the world—have they at length discarded the foolishness of the old days of ignorance, and at-

tained unto wisdom? In what land do the masses, do the rulers, show sound judgment in seeking only those things which are true, honest, just, pure, and good? in promoting their own secular prosperity, and shunning all sources of mischief and sorrow? Do they not make their own burdens, and go on to increase them, though bending, groaning, writhing? Are they not evermore undoing their own work, the result of their best thought, the object of unstinted eulogy? Do they not gather slowly to scatter wastefully, build up by gigantic effort to batter down in a day, and turn their inventive genius to the more rapid destruction of human life? Do they not sow broadcast seeds of strife, hate, revenge, and then wonder and tremble at the harvests into which these grow up? Has the world yet discovered a science of government, of social organization, of law, which will protect and foster the rights and interests of all classes; which will guard against the tyranny of the few and the madness of the many; which will unite stability and progress? Many are the inventions of man. He flies on the wings of the steam, and bears his goods along with him in the swift flight; he sends the lightning as his messenger, and speaks with distant lands without loss of time; he employs the air and water to do his

work; he erects marble mansions, and converts the waste into an Eden; but how to reconcile the vast accumulations of the few with the comfort, or even bare subsistence, of the multitude; how to be rid of loathsome wretchedness and degradation in the very neighborhood of splendor, profusion, and gayety; how to repress and restrain the lusts, passions, false sentiments, caprices of the people which threaten a vaster destruction than can be wrought by the elements of nature—these are problems too hard for his skill.

But let us turn from man the species to man the individual, and ask: Where is the wise? Who has foresight? Who does not miscalculate? Who blunders not in his own policy? Much that passes for wisdom is low cunning; and how often are the crafty caught in their own snares! If they succeed, they purchase success by their own dishonor, the curses of those they have injured, the scorn of the public, the remorse of conscience. Sin is, indeed, the huge folly of man and the parent of all follies. See the folly of the miser, who starves himself to heap up idle riches; of the spendthrift, who wastes and perverts his fortune on his own degradation and ruin, and brings upon himself premature old age without means, friends, or pity; of the glutton and drunkard, who whet and glut

appetite until the body becomes a bloated mass of disease, and mind, reputation, self-respect, and self-command are irretrievably lost ; of the debauchee, who renounces the chaste and lasting pleasures of virtue and home for a base, fleeting, and poisoned gratification ; of the vain and ambitious, who live on the breath of human praise, and are made wretched by a slight, a laugh, a frown—abject slaves of opinion ; of the discontented and cowardly, who enjoy not what they have in their restless and insatiate desire for more, in their fruitless anxieties and trembling fears ; of the petulant and passionate, who turn life into a torment, their own breast into a hell, by the tempers they cherish, and wreak on themselves a more terrible vengeance than their worst enemies can inflict ; of the jealous and the envious, who pine away at the thought of the prosperity of their fellows.

If we take eternity into account, what fools we are ! If there be no hereafter, but thought, sensibility, and will are quenched with the light of the eyes, who would boast of a wisdom which blazes up an instant to perish forever ? But if after death there be a judgment, what words can express his infatuation who on the venture of a little enjoyment during the few years of his worldly state sacrifices the hope of a blessed immortality, and

kindles for himself the fires of ~~an~~ ^{the} everlasting punishment? "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom."

"Neither let the mighty man glory in his might." The time has passed in which men boasted of bodily strength, stature, and agility. Science and art have so far distanced all possible achievements of mere sinews that we do not think of the power of man's arm. Forces of nature which were hidden are now revealed; forces at which men gazed in impotent terror are now applied to be his coworkers. Civilized man is greatly inclined in our day to glory in the tremendous power thus wielded. His tiny hand holds the magic wand which all nature obeys. The elements are subject to his will; the light of the sun, the winds of heaven, the thundering waterfalls wear the badges of his service and are set their tasks; forces of steam, gases, electricity, which were occult and bound, are unloosed and employed to perform works of such magnitude and difficulty as would have seemed miraculous in former days; mechanism has been invented to save, apply, increase these various powers; new emphasis is given to the psalmist's song of praise unto the Creator for the honor conferred on our race: "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast

put all things under his feet." Yet how few swell that psalm! In how many do these facts excite pride and self-confidence, as though he were a god, sufficient unto himself? Has man, then, created these forces, or does he only use those which God has created for his sake, under the laws which God has ordained? Besides, what limitations there are to the utmost power of the whole species, lest we be exalted above measure! There are times when the tempests that walk the deep shiver in their strong arms his noblest ships, and hide crew and cargo in the soundless depths; when the storm clouds that muster in the sky launch forth their burning bolts to consume in a moment man and his home; when the whirlwind and tornado sweep before their path his costly works as though they were straws; when the quaking earth opens to engulf populous cities, the burning mountain rolls forth rapid streams of melted rock to cover town and plain, and the tidal wave of ocean drowns the land; when swollen streams and fires breaking forth beyond control destroy the gatherings of the industry and patience of years; when the very might which he has developed and used for his own purposes scorns the reins by which he would guide and check its action, and hurls him into instantaneous destruction, by an exploded magazine,

a burst boiler, or like catastrophe; when pestilence, whose birthplace he cannot discover, whose form he cannot touch nor discern, sounding no trump of warning, issuing no voice of command, spreading no banner of authority, secret as fate, silent as death, an enemy whose march he cannot oppose, withers all the strength of man, and turns his loud boastings into mute despair.

Who is the mighty man? The king and conqueror. He sits enthroned above his fellows; the crown and purple are the symbols of his dignity; he holds the keys of the prison and the power of death; millions bow to his authority, armies equip and train to uphold and extend his sway; his favor is as the ray of the morning sun and the dropping of the dew, his frown terrible as the roar of a lion and the blackness of a tempest; before the pomp of his coming, the flash of his sword, nations grow pale, and haste to bend low and sue for peace. How dazzling to human eye that glory! How the strongest head dizzies at that height! Yet let not the mighty glory in his might. Too many, sudden, vast are the vicissitudes of life, too short the space during which any man can retain his sovereignty, to warrant trust in princely power. He cannot secure his own heart against the intrusion of care and sorrow, nor his own life against the

perils of assassination, battle, accident, and disease. One monarch dies in a drunken debauch, another is slain in battle, a third falls beneath the daggers of a conspiracy, a fourth is killed in a hunt, a fifth dies of disease in lonely captivity, a sixth at home amid the vain helps of medical skill and friendly sympathy. Tell me not of any majesty or might, unless it can contend with Death and conquer this common foe. What matter the purple robe, the jeweled crown, the symbolic scepter, the obsequious court, the titled noblemen, the obedient people, the grand army, the victory that sits upon the standard, the pomp of music that announces the approach of royalty, the awe of nations, and all else that may appertain to the kingly and conquering hero, if Death will not respect his rank and will not fear his power ; if Death, like an ominous shadow, stand every hour in his path ; if Death whisper continually in his ear, "I am thy king ;" if Death walk boldly through the thick ranks of his armed soldiers, past the sentinels that guard his person, within the gates of his palace, and smite him down, unresisting, helpless, to rise no more ? Then can the oppressed huzza over the oppressor. Then moves the grave to meet the proud man at his coming ; and the dead, as they receive him, crownless, unsceptered, disrobed, in the king-

dom where there is perfect equality, say unto him: "Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?" Strike all the instruments of music; they will not be heard in these halls of silence. Unroll the pomp and splendor of royalty; they will not be seen in this black, bare kingdom. Recall the brow of majesty, the eye of authority, the lips whose voice awed and thrilled the world, the form which many worshiped; the grim skull, the empty socket, the grinning teeth, the fleshless skeleton—this is all, all left of the hero.

The mighty man, slave of accident, infirmity, disease, and death; slave of his own vanity and pride, covetousness and ambition, discontent and anxiety, lust and passion, caprice and stubbornness, jealousy and hate; slave of sin, and captive of the devil! Let him not glory in his might.

Let not the rich man glory in his riches. More numerous than the worshipers of wisdom and power are the worshipers of mammon. In the eyes of the multitude brighter than the light of knowledge, brighter than the light of glory and fame, is the glitter of gold. For one that covets wisdom, for one that covets honor, I will count you hundreds that covet money. Yea, they who seem to be votaries of literature and science are ofttimes slaves of mammon, desecrating to this

service their noble gifts: they would be wise that they may be rich. Men climb to office and power, attracted by the prospect of golden spoils. When a rich man becomes poor, he thinks his glory extinguished; when a poor man becomes rich, he thinks his happiness made. Riches are the pride and ambition of nations, the sinews and prize of war, the motive and reward of peace. For riches sails whiten every sea, the miner ransacks the bowels of the earth, and the diver plunges to the bottom of the deep; science searches out the secrets of nature, and skill multiplies the inventions of art; the brow is wet with the sweat of toil and plowed with the lines of thought and the deeper traces of anxiety; the dawn is anticipated by eager industry, and the night illumined that labor be not arrested; the artist studies beauty, the poet sings his song, the orator pours forth his eloquence, the author publishes his treasures of thought, the soldier girds on his armor, and the statesman ponders the difficult problems of government. For riches truth is bartered, and justice sold; perjury is added to falsehood and fraud, and hands are stained with brothers' blood; a good name, honor, conscience, family, friends, country, and immortality are surrendered. Yet let not the rich man glory in his riches. They are too uncertain: eaten by the moth, corroded by

the rust, swept off by the swollen tide, buried by the blue wave, burned by the hot fire ; filched from us by cunning, wrested by violence, lost by the un-faithfulness of agents, sunk in the fluctuations of trade and the convulsions of society. They are too unsatisfying. They give not content, for none are more craving than the rich ; nor peace, for none are more cankered with the cares of life, and agitated by fear ; nor comfort and quiet, for none suffer more envyings and enmities in the community, more strife and bitterness among kindred and in the bosom of home ; nor security against the ills of life, for neither can they guard against disease and bereavement, nor fortify the soul with courage and patience, but too often they soften by luxury the hardihood of poverty, and cause the mind to brood gloomily over misfortune. They are too filthy and corrupting ; incrusted with blood, cankered with injustice, the reward of iniquity, a thin gilding of folly and crime, they confer not dignity of character, elevation of mind and heart. Often they have converted simplicity into affectation and artifice ; temperance into gluttony, drunkenness, and license ; kindness and generosity into hard and grasping selfishness ; conscientiousness into a lawless, proud, and greedy self-will ; faith in God and his fear into idolatrous love of money and utter infidelity.

Riches are too short-lived; men they may bribe, death they cannot; we may save them through many calamities, beyond the grave we cannot carry them; the more we have, the more we leave; they may make life desirable; but in the same ratio they render death the more hated and dreaded. Let not the rich man glory in his riches.

In what, then, shall man glory? Not in his own wisdom, might, or riches, but in this, saith the Lord, "that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

Travelers report certain tribes of men who have scarcely any conception of a being higher than themselves. These are the lowest sunk in ignorance and imbecility, scarcely raised above the beasts that perish. Man is lifted above the brutes by the thought of God and the sentiment of worship.

Without the light of the Bible, how dark, confused, and erring is the mind touching the Deity! Men have deified their fellows. They have worshiped the host of heaven and the elements of the earth. Insects, reptiles, fishes, birds, and beasts have been adored as gods. They have bowed before the misshapen block and curiously carved marble. The imagination has invented divinities,

given them a local habitation and a name, and prayed to these figments of fancy, these embellishments of poetry.

Amid these temples, altars, statues, superstitious rites; amid these many priests each jealous for the honor of his own god, and these worshiping multitudes anxious to propitiate them all, how sublime, how light-giving sounds forth the word, “Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord;” and that other word, “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth!”

Grand, indeed, and satisfying, it is to rise above gross matter, and reach the thought of pure spirit; to go beyond the bewildering diversity of shapes and qualities which make the universe, and find out the unity, that single mind and will, without peer or rival, who planned and created out of naught the whole and all its parts, and determined their several times, places, properties, and laws—the being of beings, cause of causes, force of forces, life of lives; to look beneath the ceaseless, unresting changes which affect all created things, and discern One who is immutable, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; to turn away from the ever-recurring series of objects which grow out of and depend one upon another, and discover the Inde-

pendent, who is unoriginated, self-existent, self-sufficing, on whom hang all things else ; to behold Him who, free from all limitations of time, is from everlasting to everlasting ; whose presence, free from all limitations of space, is perfect and entire in man, in all worlds, and beyond the utmost verge of creation, filling immensity ; to whose power there are no degrees of ease, and can be neither resistance, difficulty, nor weariness ; whose will is executed without necessity of time and hindered by no interposition of distance, the sum of all other forces being less in comparison than the small dust of the balance against the aggregated gravitation of all the worlds ; from whose wisdom nothing is hid, but it sees the end from the beginning, and penetrates all substance and all spirit : to feel that this is the rock on which creation rests, this the arm by which creation is encircled, this the eye by which creation is guided—the solid rock on which we are supported, the mighty arm by which we are infolded, the unerring eye by which we are directed—this is glorious, to understand and know thee, that thou art Jehovah.

Yet it were incomplete and unsatisfactory to understand only these natural attributes, his eternity, omnipresence, almighty power, and infinite wisdom ; we must learn also his moral perfections.

What deities men have imagined and adored—false, faithless, dishonest, unjust, drunken, lewd, passionate, revengeful, cruel, quarrelsome, malignant; the patrons of liars, tricksters, thieves, drunkards, debauchees, plunderers, tyrants, bloodthirsty warriors! They fashioned their gods after their own lusts and passions, and then fostered and sanctioned their own vices and crimes by the example and aid of these worshiped monsters. Above this carnival of lust, these frantic cries and rites of passion, has been heard a solemn voice: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which wast, and art, and art to come.”

There are in man a mind to search out and delight in truth and knowledge and a taste to enjoy the beautiful and grand; there is also a higher faculty, the conscience, to revere the right, to adore the pure, the lovely, and the good. We turn away disgusted and abhorring from the story of vice and iniquity as these have been represented from age to age in every inhabited land, from the vile scenes on which the daily sun shines down and the night spreads a decent veil. Retiring within ourselves, we are humiliated by the wickedness within our own bosom, the guilt of our own lives, the strength of passion over reason and conscience, the mixture of base and selfish motives in our best acts; we are

shocked and brought well-nigh to despair as we discover the foibles, blemishes, instability, of the few whom we had trusted and put in our hearts as patterns of excellence. When these pillars have fallen, this fine gold proved to be in part dross, then do we take refuge in the thought of God, of his eternal and boundless perfection that never dims, and is without a flaw; the truth in which there is no mixture of falsehood, the faithfulness which fails not of a jot or a tittle of his promise, the justice which cannot be warped but holds an even balance, the purity from which corruption recoils and flees as darkness from the light, the benevolence which is absolutely disinterested and delights to do good; we exult to gaze on this complete embodiment, this exact standard and measure of rectitude and love, the uncreated sun, the fountain and fullness of all that is good, lovely, and adorable. “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”

To know, love, and worship God as the Spirit of holiness is surely the height of human glory. Yet at this day, in the center of Christendom, men eminent in science teach by lecture and press, and glory to teach, the baldest materialism—that there is no God, no spirit, no free will; that what we

call conscience is only a property of matter; that virtue, duty, right, moral responsibility, religion, are mental delusions; that there are no such realities as vice, injustice, sin; that the punishment of crime, the praise of virtue, the shame and remorse of an evil conscience, the sustaining power of self-approval in a good course against misfortune, the whole system of moral government and culture, are irrational and illusory; that neither is censure due to ingratitude, nor veneration to self-sacrifice; that matter in its varied forms, ceaseless change, chance, fate, are all, and if there be a God, these are God. How all spiritual light, harmony, beauty, and grandeur are blotted out by this doctrine, and the world of act and thought becomes a frozen, dreary waste, nothing to be admired, loved, or trusted! There is no room for aspiration or hope, but only to eat, drink, and sleep to-day, and to-morrow die; the successive generations of men are bubbles thrown up by unconscious forces on an ever-heaving ocean, to float awhile on the surface, to be driven by any chance breeze, to sparkle in the sunlight, and then to break and fall back into the mass of unintelligent matter. The world by wisdom knows not God.

But we must bring God nearer to us. It is not enough to contemplate him in his sole, essential,

and eternal glory ; we need to look on that glory as manifested especially in his relation to our race. “ Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power ; not one faileth.” Like the several corps of a disciplined army, the constellations of heaven wheel and march on that vast plain at his command in absolute perfection of time and order, and each satellite, planet, star—those nearest the earth, those, too, which tremble faintly on what seem to us the confines of space, those which are to us invisible, their light never reaching our eye, or making on it no impression, so withdrawn are they in the far-off inscrutable depths—each orb, known by name to the great Captain, moves at his voice, and observes his appointed place and season. But here we see the High and Holy One presiding not over mere matter, but over the nobler world of thought, conscience, affection, and free will ; over intelligent, voluntary, and accountable beings, each of whom transcends in value the whole material creation.

There is no nation or government of earth in which I can glory. The history of the most illustrious people is full of falsehood, lust, rapacity, and

oppression. Every government, though eulogized as the last result of human progress, contains in itself the elements of weakness and dissolution, of misrule or anarchy. Nor can I glory in any ruler, however named. If ever so competent, he must die, and his successor may overthrow his work. Yea, during his brief, uncertain reign, he is weak, ignorant, short-sighted, liable to be deceived and counteracted, though his aims be pure and noble. Yea, the best are still imperfect in moral character, and subject to be turned from the right by passion and self-interest. The multitude are fickle, passionate, misguided ; rulers seek their own aggrandizement, and wield the sword too often as a terror to the good and a protection to the vile ; the ermine of the judge is stained with corruption, jurors are bribed or deceived by sophistry and false witnesses, and the highest courts blinded by prejudice, ambition, or cupidity ; the most renowned empires, though they have seemed to be fixed as the hills that diversify their surface and free as the seas that wash their shores, yet betrayed by pride, enervated by luxury, dwindle and dim by internal corruption, and are then shattered by outward violence. But there is one in whom I can glory : in that throne which is uplifted above all thrones, the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and

Lord of lords, who reigns not by accident, but by right, through all the ages, in his own essential and independent majesty and might; in that Judge who sits over all human tribunals, before whom every case will be tried though it fail of a hearing here, and every decision of these lower courts will be revised, whose judgment is the final settlement on full and accurate knowledge by the principles of eternal equity; in that eye which pierces the cover of night and the recesses of the heart, seeing the need, the motive, the character; in that Justice which cannot be tempted or awed, is biased by no prejudice, and holds his sharp sword over the head of the highest, and his strong shield before the breast of the humblest; in that Holiness which hates and loathes every vile thing, however adorned and disguised, and delights not in the beauty of the landscape and the sublimity of the firmament, in the victories of the hero and the songs of genius, but in humility, truth, faith, righteousness, and charity, in the innocence of childhood, the tears of the penitent, and the triumph of tried integrity; in that Goodness which does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men, which flows forth freely in streams of bounty and listens to the cry of distress, in whom the fatherless findeth mercy, the widow protection. “The Lord reigneth; let

the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him : righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.”

Brightest, most blessed, most lovely of all the manifestations of the eternal Father is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. This is life eternal, life to the dead, that we may “know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Here love to the sinful and the lost, reconciled with justice, assumes her sweetest shape as saving mercy, and he who sat enthroned above the heavens in the midst of an adoring hierarchy of unstained spirits, with an effulgence too dazzling for mortal vision, enshrines himself in flesh, and becomes at once our Lord and brother, Immanuel, God with us, making the house of Martha and Mary and the heart of the contrite his chosen home. We not only lean on his almighty as on a rock, but we soothe these palpitating hearts in sweet and sure repose on his great heart of love, the feeble pulse of our spiritual life beating in unison with the mighty throbings of his infinite grace. We are not only embraced by that Presence which comprehends all things and beyond which no creature can go, but we feel

that we are fondly clasped in arms of mercy and sheltered beneath paternal wings. We go up to the throne of the invisible, eternal King, not trembling, as slaves and criminals, but in the boldness and full assurance of faith, frank and fearless as childhood, and placing our feeble hand in his hand of almighty power, we say, “Our Father.”

From the foaming, storm-swept sea of guilt and woe and fear I now emerge, and with outstretched arms clasp the Rock that is higher than I, and find refuge in its mystic cleft.

Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

I who just now was sinking in despair beneath the mighty roaring billows, who with spent strength saw the Eternal Rock towering in solitary grandeur far above their roll, and, trembling betwixt hope and fear, faintly cried out, “Mercy,” now stayed on this sure foundation, sheltered in this secure cleft, look forth undaunted, ecstatic, and shout, “Halleluiah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

III.

THE INWARD STRUGGLE.

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans vii. 24.)

BY the body of this death I understand in-dwelling sin. It is called the body of this death, because by sin we are dead to God and to holiness ; because sin is a mass of corruption, com-pared by Christ to the rottenness and dead men’s bones contained in a sepulcher, as here to a corpse ; and because eternal death is the wages of sin. This hateful, noisome, deadly sin cleaves to Paul, or to the man whom Paul describes ; and he cries out that he is a wretch indeed, and asks, Who shall de-liver me from this dire evil ?

The text is the crisis of a terrible inward strug-gle. Nowhere else in all literature is there so graphic a description of the mortal duel between the soul and sin. Every man’s experience will help him to form some conception of this strife. But only those who have yielded to the awakening and convicting power of the Holy Spirit can fully un-derstand the wretchedness, self-despair, loathing, terror, and longing for rescue, which burst forth in the exclamation, “O wretched man that I am !”

and the inquiry, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

To understand this description, we must bear in mind that Paul discriminates between a man’s self, his personal identity, on the one hand, and sin, on the other. “Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” The same distinction is indicated in the parable of the prodigal son: “And when he came to himself.” All the days of his rioting he had been beside himself, had gone away from reason and right feeling and self-control; sin in the forms of lust, passion, and willfulness had possessed and ruled him; then he began to recover his wits, to return to sound thought; he came to himself, and found that he had been acting the part of folly, had thrown away great privileges, and brought himself to the point of perishing. Paul describes a strife betwixt two; the parties are the soul and sin personified as a living power.

When does this struggle begin? Paul goes back to a time in his history when he was at peace; he tells how his state of ease was broken, and an inward war commenced in which he was ever defeated, until exhausted, bruised, despairing, he cried out for a deliverer. “For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law

once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

Take an innocent child. Sin dwells in him—that is, original or birth-sin, "the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually." This truth is briefly stated in these words of Christ: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." But the law has not yet come to the understanding of this child. He knows nothing of responsibility to God, of duty, of holiness. He has no sense of guilt, defilement, danger. How calm, free, and fearless is that smiling boy! He is alive, peaceful, happy; there is in him no consciousness of sin; sin sleeps, lies motionless, has no power to condemn and alarm him. A few years later you may find him in a serious, thoughtful, troubled mood. Light has shone into his mind; conscience has aroused and stirred itself; he has heard the solemn voice of the law, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not;" his feelings incline him one way, and the commandment opposes; sin asserts lordship over him, and at once drives him into the commission of wrong, and lashes him for it. The strife has begun in the history of that boy.

Take now a pagan. He is without the written law. Yet there is a law written in his heart. Let us suppose him a rude savage. He is almost without light. Conscience he has, but it is an undeveloped faculty, scarcely more than a capacity to be trained to the appreciation of virtue and obligation. He possesses the mere rudiments of moral knowledge. Dim and meager is the outline of the law which the finger of God has traced on his soul. His life is animal, hungering and thirsting, eating and drinking, fatiguing himself and sleeping; a gregarious animal, but selfish, passionate, willful, and cruel. There is present in his mind the difference between good and evil, in his heart the feeling of moral obligation, but it may be called latent or dormant: he has no clear, full-drawn line between right and wrong, no distinct and strong moral sensibility. He is alive without the law. It is not a high, rich, blessed life; it is, indeed, a very low, brutal life; yet it is undisturbed by the sense of guilt, degradation, and exposure to wrath. Sin in him is dead to this extent, in this meaning, that it is not realized as transgression, or as pollution, or as liability to the perdition of hell; that it has no power to condemn him, and bow him under a load of shame, and put him at strife with himself, and terrify him with visions and prophe-

cies of judgment to come. The case will be different, there will be an epoch in his life, when the commandment comes ; when he shall hear the great voice of God proclaiming in tones that carry conviction and awe, “Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet;” when he shall listen, thunder-struck, to the curses of the law and to the solemn sentence, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die;” when his heart shall be shown in the blazing light of the holiness which God requires, to be filled with all that is vile, deceitful, and odious. Then he will see sin everywhere, in his acts, in his lips, in his thoughts, in his tempers, in the settled state of his heart. Sin will be alive, active, mighty, triumphant; and he will be as one dead, slain by sin, already void of all good, and sure to be destroyed by his enemy world without end. This is the experience of the heathen to whom the word of the Lord is sent.

Next take Paul. He was born under the law. He was taught it from his childhood. He made it his special study at the feet of Gamaliel. It was his boast. How then can it be said of him that he was alive without the law once? Because he misunderstood the law. Because the veil was over his

face—the veil of unbelief, pride, a carnal mind. He knew the letter of the law, but not the spirit. He imagined himself blameless, when he was the chief of sinners. He thought himself meritorious at the time that his not being cut down by the just displeasure of God was a marvel of divine mercy and long-suffering. The first and greatest law of supreme love to God, a love which renounces self-will and self-seeking, and submits head, heart, and life wholly to God, he knew not; nor the second law, the love of his neighbor as of himself. Saul of Tarsus was in darkness. That darkness nourished false security, pride, and delusive hope. He held his head high; he gloried in his own righteousness; he thought that no man could lay aught to his discredit. Sin was dead in his consciousness; he felt not its shame, compunction, and terror. The law was overlaid by traditions and glosses, and perverted by the blind prejudices of his heart. Was the law, or Christ, revealed to him on the way to Damascus? Did the commandment, or did Jesus, smite him to the earth? Did he tremble at the light of the law, or at the glory of the Son of man? I answer that the revelation of the Lord Jesus is also the revelation of the law. He came to fulfill the law and to make plain its meaning and sanctions. Sinai and Calvary are

closely connected: if there had been no law, there would have been no cross. Sin and salvation are the two themes, the two facts, of the gospel; sin comes first, and without the law there could be no sin. The true, deep, broad import of the law, its authority, majesty, and holiness, the necessity that its every statute be engraved on the heart, and that its very spirit be breathed into all the workings of mind and life, were taught Saul the Pharisee in the illumination of that hour when he lay in the dust at the feet of Jesus, and of those three days which he spent in Damascus without sight, and did neither eat nor drink. “When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” Sin, as his master, as the corruption of his nature, as the turpitude of his life—sin, which he had never known before—now confronted him, looked him in the face, said, “You are my captain, my slave,” accused, reviled, shamed, scourged, terrified him. His heart died within him; hope died; sin with the sharp sword of the law slew him.

There are times in the history of adult men on Christian soil when the commandment comes almost like a new revelation, when the Holy Spirit, applying truth which in the letter, in the sound, was familiar, convicts of sin. Men can in a great measure shut their eyes to the light, their ears to

the divine voice, harden their hearts to reproof, and live in ease and self-complacency, as though there were no God, no responsibility, no hereafter. But they are arrested ; a strong supernatural light shines suddenly into their eyes ; the truth cuts through their callousness, and reaches the quick ; they hear the thunders of Sinai, and see the fearful oncoming splendors of the day of judgment. This is conviction ; this is the awakening of the sinner. If he fight not against the Spirit, but cherish and follow his light and leading, then he will reach the crisis of the text, and his whole soul will groan and cry out with a sense of wretchedness and of extreme peril, with an intense longing to be rid of the load of sin and death.

I have described man alive without the law, at ease in ignorance, in insensibility ; and also the rising of light upon his darkness, the commandment appearing to him and uttering its warning and penalty. Now let us trace the effect.

The first effect is the bowing of the soul in recognition of the divine authority and excellence of the law. “By manifestation of the truth we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” There is a response in the heart ; the inner eye sees the light of God’s truth ; the inner ear hears the voice of God’s command ; the

man acknowledges the justice, purity, and binding force of the law. “ Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” There is no denying this; conviction is forced upon the mind. The law condemns and sentences him; but the law is right, and he is wrong; the law is good, and he is evil. “ I consent unto the law that it is good.” Even hard, profligate, selfish Felix trembled at the preaching of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. The reasoner was a frail man, his prisoner; but the conscience of the governor heard in what he said the voice of God, and he feared the majesty and power of the divine law. King David bowed his head at the rebuke of one of his subjects, an unarmed man, Nathan the prophet, and said humbly: “ I have sinned against the Lord.” “ I ought to obey God, to keep his commandments,” is the irresistible conviction and feeling of every man; and this sentiment is a power in all who do not resist the truth.

What next?· Does the convinced sinner turn to righteousness, and keep the law, so as to win the approval of conscience? Alas! he comes to a sad discovery: “ The law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.” A strong, swollen current of sin sweeps away the obstruction of the law and the protest of conscience and the fear of wrath, and

bears him on farther and farther from God and downward to perdition. Consent to the law that it is good, that it should be observed, does not carry with it actual obedience or the power to obey. There is in the carnal mind an antagonism to the law, a fixed hatred. “I see another law in my members warring against the law in my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Let us look at this law in the members, this reigning power which issues its commands directly against those of God. The law in the mind is conscience illumined and quickened by the Spirit. The law in the members is not merely sensuality, fleshly lusts, the excess and perversion of physical appetite, though this is included, and gives name to the whole. The members must be understood figuratively. As when we are besought to present our body a living sacrifice the entire man is meant, the body being expressed for the sake of vividness, of picturing to the eye the person laid on the altar as of old a lamb, so here the law in the members denotes sensual sin and the whole corruption of nature, by which every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil continually. “Sin that dwelleth in me,” says Paul. There is a mighty uprising of depravity, which is not subject to the law of God, and will

not permit him to do what he knows to be holy, just, and good. A law in my members which, when God says, “Look not on the wine, for at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder,” opposes God, and bids the eye gloat on the wine, and the nostrils inhale its odor, and the hand grasp the cup, and the lips smack over the taste, and the throat swallow the poison ; a law in my members which, when God says, “Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not be angry with thy brother,” contradicts God, and vehemently demands that vengeance shall be hissing hot in the heart, and that blood be shed, and that pride and revenge drink their satisfaction.

There are parts of this graphic account of the inward strife which may puzzle you, because they seem to affirm that the very existence of sin in us is due to the law ; but if you notice closely, you will see that the apostle implies all the while the presence of sin as a depravity of our nature. “For when we were in the flesh,” in our natural state of corruption, “the motions of sins,” all sinful thoughts, desires, passions, “which were by the law [this is what must be explained], did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law :

for I had not known lust," evil desire, " except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Of course a man can covet who never heard any law against coveting. He may take vengeance, though he never knew that hate and revenge are forbidden. He would be conscious of his own feelings, of his greed after the property of others, of his anger and resentment; but he would not know them as sin. He would follow his feelings blindly, impulsively, instinctively, as a beast seizes his food, and tears in pieces his prey; but when the voice of duty has been heard, when the obligation of justice and love has been felt, these passions become to him sin. They are deliberate, not instinctive; they are transgressions of the law. They henceforth produce shame, remorse, and fear.

The law brings out into consciousness and greater virulence the sin which, as a tendency, a taint, a poison, lurks in the members, in the blood, in the entire being. Like horses whose wildness and viciousness are not known, until they are harnessed, and the driver attempts to hold them in with bit and rein, and to guide them, and when they are stubborn, to compel them with the whip—then they rear, plunge, and kick, or run away at uncontrollable speed, and dash the driver to the ground, and break the vehicle into fragments;

like serpents that have lain quiet, yet with all their malice and venom in them, until sunlight enters their cage, and then they stir and hiss, and strike out their forked tongues. The sin that dwells in us, that cleaves to the soul more closely than the skin to the body, that is an infection of our nature in our calmest moments, even when we sleep—this sin manifests its presence, power, persistence, and deadliness by occasion of the law, and rages against the commandment as a willful man against whatever opposes him. Who of us has not felt this spirit of disobedience, this independence of all restraint, this proud self-assertion, this keenness of desire and passion, this violent enmity against holiness and divine control, drawn forth by the very illumination of truth, by the very knowledge that sin is forbidden, that righteousness should be done ?

At the door of man's heart stand two parties, each demanding his allegiance. One is the law, the representative of Jehovah, man's Creator and Lord, speaking in his name, bearing from him credentials in his own handwriting. The authority, majesty, and sovereignty of God are delegated to the law : it comes in his glorious and fearful name to require instant, full, uncompromising submission and obedience ; it denounces woe against the

transgressor, saying: “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” The conscience, the highest department of man’s complex being, acknowledges the sole right of the Lord God, and trembles at the terror of his righteous wrath. But sin rises up, with a brazen brow of effrontery, with a tongue bold and blasphemous, and speaking great swelling words; and sin defies God, and spurns his mandate, and mocks at his threat, and claims man, saying: “Thou art my subject, my captive, my slave; mine thou shalt remain, and me thou shalt serve.” And he continues under this yoke, in this vile bondage, though his mind consents to the law that it is good; that in obeying it are peace, honor, safety, blessedness, and life; and that in serving sin are bitterness, degradation, remorse, and death.

Here begins the inward strife, the deadly duel, of which I spoke. Man is divided against himself. To use Paul’s figure, man, the self, the personality, vainly contends with sin, an alien and hostile power. The distinction between the true self and usurping sin is strongly drawn. “For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I

would do good, evil is present with me." Hated presence! loathed infection! vilest of all tyrannies! There is a state in which self is not distinguishable from sin, so close a union, so complete an identity, is established between them; what sin says, the man says, putting light for darkness and darkness for light, the sweet for the bitter and the bitter for the sweet, good for evil and evil for good; what sin commands, the man does with alacrity, with greediness, rolling it as a sweet morsel under the tongue. The case is far different with him who yields to the convincing Spirit of truth. He approves the law of the Lord, delights in its holiness, longs after conformity; he hates, abhors, dreads sin. Yet he cannot shake it off. He can no more cure it than he can cure the leprosy. Samson, blind, fettered, grinding for the Philistines, was not more a slave than this man is a slave of sin.

Illustrations abound. Select the drunkard struggling to be free. Does he consent to the life which he is leading? No; he once did, but not now. Sin deceived him, telling him that the law of abstinence is harsh, unnecessary, tyrannical; that he ought to assert his liberty and independence; that no harm can come from self-pleasing; that in its service are generous and lasting pleasures. So he rebelled against the wholesome restraints of

virtue, and served sin. But his eyes are opened. Sin is poisoning his body, destroying his reputation, embittering every fountain of delight. Sin is disgrace, remorse, ruin, here and hereafter. If he could only throw off this yoke, and dash the accursed cup away forever, how happy he would be! But there is another law in his members warring against the law of the mind. A demon is enthroned within. When he would do right, the love of liquor, the devil of drink, is too strong for him. O wretched man! who shall deliver him from this body of death?

That is only one habit. Sin has many forms not less fatal. It may be as pride, vindictiveness, coveting after money, devotion to fashion, the love of the world, that sin reigns in you, and defiles all the working of thought and feeling. It is, whatever the particular form, alienation from God and insubordination to his authority.

The law cannot help you. It is perfect for its own purposes; it is holy, and just, and good. But it is weak through the flesh, through the carnality of your nature. The most nutritious viands turn to death in the diseased stomach; the most beautiful light pains, inflames, blinds the diseased eye; the wisest and most beneficent government becomes the jailer and executioner of the criminal.

The commandment which was ordained to life, which is the path of pleasantness and peace, sin converts into condemnation, anathema, and death. Sin seizes the law as a club, beats and bruises its captive, breaks all his bones, and brings him into despair; and he cries out of the depths of his shame, anguish, and terror: “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?”

There comes an answer: “Thank God!” Like the coming of a lifeboat to a wrecked crew at the point to perish, like the friendly step of one who brings a ransom to the captive moaning in his cell and expecting the messenger of death, so comes the response to the sinner: “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

I will not now discuss how this deliverance is wrought. My object has been to depict your sad state in sin, to help you realize your impotence and danger, that the law may bring you to the feet of Christ. I wished only to tell you that there is one strong to deliver, mighty to save; that what the law could not do, Christ the Lord has done for us; that he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of him.

When that need is felt and owned, and your

soul cries out for salvation, Christ is at hand. I will say this much, that he has satisfied the claims of the law for the believer, and that we are divorced from the legal covenant and married to Christ, to serve him in newness of spirit, freed from condemnation, not under the law, but under grace. I will say, further, that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death. There is a new graft on the old stock of our nature, and it bears very precious fruit. A new mind, a new heart, is given us, and we become free and strong to do the will of God, as a son serveth his father. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. He who has power to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," has power to say also: "Go and sin no more. Go, an absolved and changed man. Go in the liberty and power with which I endow thee."

Brother, stand fast in this liberty. Remembering your bondage, say to the glory of God: "I thank thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Never enter again into this servitude. If we fight against sin, it is not, thank God, a helpless, despairing struggle; it is hopeful, victorious, a march from strength to strength and from triumph to triumph, with the sure prospect of seeing the en-

emy slain at our feet and of being saved from fear forever and ever.

Unconverted friend, I call upon you to-day. Are you convinced and tired of sin? Would you be a new creature, the Lord's freedman? There is help, One able to save unto the uttermost. Oh, that you would cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "Lord, save, or I perish!" These cries bring the rescuer. Faster than the mother flies to her distressed and imperiled child, Christ will fly to your deliverance. His sword will slay sin; his hand will lift you to your feet, heal all your wounds, strengthen you with might in the inner man, and send you on your heavenly way rejoicing. In honor of my Master and Saviour, my Redeemer from all sin, and in love to your souls, I long to hear this glad shout from your lips also: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

IV.

THE OFFENDING EYE.

“And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.” (Matthew xviii. 9.)

If the eye be regarded as a piece of mechanism, it is a marvel of divine skill. The covering lid and fringe of lashes, the protecting coats, the pupil with its power of contraction and dilating to admit the light according to the degree of its brilliancy, the many-colored iris or curtain that encircles the pupil, the humors that refract the light, the muscles that move the ball as there may be need, the retina to receive the picture of outward objects, the nerve which transmits the impression to the brain—these together form a structure so delicate, so defended against injury, so perfectly adjusted to its important uses, as to attest the handiwork of God. Our admiration heightens when we consider those uses for which it was designed. How vast, how various, how important the knowledge which we gain through the eye; how many and exquisite the pleasures which it

gives! Finer than the touch, it takes knowledge of the motes swimming in the sunbeams, infinite in number and yet unfelt, though in contact with our persons; swifter than the foot, and farther stretching than the hand, it travels miles to the horizon and upward to the heavens an unmeasured distance, and grasps the stars, those mighty worlds independent of our own tiny globe and far withdrawn in the abysmal depths of space. It can fix its attention on a single object, near and minute; on the diamond which sparkles on the finger; on things so small as to elude the clumsy fingers; with the aid of the microscope on insect forms and impalpable dust of flowers—aye, on shadows, whether cast by waving leaf or floating cloud or transit of a planet. It can widen its range, and in one instant hold firm and steady an unlimited number and variety of objects: on the eye is pictured a great city, its closely built streets, straggling suburbs, towers and spires lifting themselves above the roofs, busy wharves, and harbor with its hundred masts, the forest of the river, or a landscape covering an area of many square miles, leafy woods, and fields of grain, and grassy meadows, and grazing flocks and herds, and houses with the curling smoke, and men at work or ease, and streams curtained with mists, and broad-based,

high-towering hills whose heads stand out clear against the sky, or veil themselves in cloud; or the sky, blue, deep, earth-embracing like a canopy, or the starry heavens far beyond the atmosphere. Graceful shapes, beautiful hues, grandeur of height and depth and vastness, familiar scenes endeared by a thousand associations, faces of those we love dearer than all besides—how large a part of the enjoyment of life comes from these sources, from the single source of vision! There is another world which the eye may claim for itself—the world of written thought. Glancing through printed volumes with their white leaves and black marks, so void of beauty or significance in themselves, yet signs of thoughts which are more valuable than the material universe, the eye rapidly gathers for the mind the riches of human research, philosophy, and imagination; for the heart, the sweet and thrilling utterances of the sentiments and passions which stir the race; it is permitted also to gaze on a glory more holy and august than the old shekinah, the wisdom of inspiration and the gospel of the Son of God.

I have spoken of the structure of the eye, and of the acquaintance we obtain by its means with the physical universe, human thought, and divine revelation. There is a third admirable quality of

this organ which I would mention—its capacity of expression. It has been regarded as the immediate seat of the mind and soul. There shines the clear light of intellect, so that this spiritual principle becomes almost visible; we apprehend the mind of the man in the brightness of his eye. Again, diversified as the seven prismatic hues and as the countless combinations of these primitive colors in nature and art, the emotions of the soul, an infinite variety of light and shade and coloring, display themselves in the changeful expressiveness of this one feature. The body is a house inhabited by an immaterial essence; it is firmly supported upon pillars; the head is its noble dome; at the window of the eye we may see the man looking forth. If we analyze the man into his several passions, personify these, and suppose them jointly to occupy this habitation, each passion may be seen at different times claiming this post of observation and showing itself to the world without, and sometimes many crowd at once to the window; pity, love, indignation, hate, envy, jealousy, joy, sorrow, hope, fear—all show their faces there by turns or together.

We are now prepared to understand the relation of the eye to morals, and to interpret the phrase, “If thine eye offend thee.” There is a twofold

view of the morality of the eye. The first depends on the power we possess to fasten the eye on an object or to divert it. If sin entice us through the eye, we can refuse to look; just as when it entices through the ear we can refuse to listen. Often our only innocence and safety are in turning away the eye from the tempting object. The very gaze is a snare, yea, is sin. Eve looked on the forbidden fruit and fell. Lot lifted up his eyes, and surveyed the rich and well-watered vale of Sodom, and it allured him to make his home among that abandoned population, and thus to incur the most serious risk to himself and his family. Lot's wife looked back on the city which had been her home and contained her treasures, but which was now doomed to destruction; she looked behind her when she should have hasted onward, and her feet stood fast, and she was changed to a pillar of salt, a monument of folly, unbelief, and disobedience. Achan looked on the gold and goodly garments amid the spoil of Jericho, and with the sight awoke coveting, and the longer he gazed the stronger grew desire, and lust conceived and brought forth sin; and sin, when it was finished, when it came into action, brought forth death. David looked on the beautiful wife of Uriah, and defiled his soul, and reddened his hands with the

deep stains of bloodguiltiness. The Bible warns us against a wrong use of the eye. "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." "I made a covenant with mine eyes," said Job, in the assertion of his integrity. There are occasions when it is best to retire from these windows of the soul, and in the secret closet seek refuge from temptation by prayer.

This is one of the meanings in which the eye may offend or cause us to stumble—namely, as the medium through which temptation presents itself. Again, we may contemplate it as the revealer of the soul. It is not the organ of sense which offends, but the several desires and passions which look out through the eye. Let us consider them separately.

There is the covetous, greedy eye: the eye that is fascinated by the yellow splendor of gold, or by the vast and varied stores for which gold is exchangeable. The eye that covets the property of our neighbor, which is a thievish eye. The eye that covets what Providence is pleased to withhold, which produces discontent, murmuring, vain desires. The eye that is close and selfish, looking only on our own things, and not also on the things

of others. This often leads to injustice or the disregard of the rights of our fellow-men; if it stop short of positive outrage, it leads to illiberality and neglect of their interests. “He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.” The sacrilegious eye, which would appropriate to profane uses what belongs to God, as Nebuchadnezzar robbed the temple at Jerusalem of its golden vessels. This is the sin of every man who, looking only on his own things, overlooks those of Christ; who keeps out of the Lord’s treasury the tithes that are due. The insatiate eye ever craves more: “There is no end of all his labor, neither is his eye satisfied with riches.” Of how many is this covetousness the besetting, the ruinous sin! “He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.” “They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” These are they who engage in those kinds of business that tend not to the good, but to the demoralization and injury, of the community, because of the profits that accrue; they who conduct a lawful and innocent business in an unjust and fraudulent manner to increase its gains; they who to save money are oppressive, and will not hearken to the cry of the needy, and with-

hold help from the Lord; they who are so eager and busy in money-making that they can find no time for religion; they whose hearts are so full of mammon from Monday dawn to Saturday midnight, either to get, to save, or to expend, that they have no room in their thoughts and affections for Christ and immortality, and even the one day in seven when they do leave their places of business is desecrated by worldly desires and calculations.

There is the lustful eye, the eye that is allured by pleasure. Jesus has taught us that the overt act is not necessary to constitute crime at the judgment seat of God, though it be in the courts of earth; that in his sight sin is already committed in the wanton look. But the look which he condemns includes the passion that feeds itself by looking, the evil intent also which only awaits, or which even now is seeking an occasion. It may be, moreover, a look that entices others to a participation in guilt. That impurity may reside in the eye, is implied in the words of Job, "The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me; and disguiseth his face;" and of Peter: "Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls." "Unto the pure," says Paul, "all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbe-

lieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.” Because the heart is impure, therefore is the eye evil, inflamed with unchaste desire, intent on opportunities of sin; beauty, grace, innocence, and loveliness are no longer admired and enjoyed for their true charms and with a pure delight, but are valued only so far as they can be desecrated to feed the corrupt sense, imagination, and passion. The gluttonous eye gloats on the luxurious dishes of a feast, and the thirsty eye on the fiery bowl; the roving eye looks restlessly everywhere in search of excitement and pleasure. “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.” “Men shall be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” How many are drawn away from duty, from religion, from any care about the soul, by the false and flattering show of worldly pleasure!

There is the ambitious, aspiring eye, that desires great things, and is fond of pomp, fashion, rank, fame—of all that makes the vain glitter and glory of this world. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.” The eyes of many are drawn away from nobler things by such vanities as broidered hair,

gold, pearls, and costly array. The poor gems of earth are more precious in their sight, more to be desired and sought, than the pearl of great price, the true ornament and treasure of the heart, even the beauty of holiness with which God will clothe the willing spirit. Whatever belongs to worldly display, dress and furniture and equipage, the ball-room, theater, and opera, a host of admirers and flatterers and suitors, titles of honor, and a welcome into circles of wealth and distinction—these are to them the attraction and worth and end of life, and this meretricious splendor outshines the glory of heaven, and this thin and flimsy gilding outweighs all the substantial treasures of immortality.

There is the haughty and disdainful eye. “These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren.” “A high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.” Pride looks coldly out of the eye; and the other side of pride is contempt. It tramples on all thought to be beneath us, tramples on their rights and on their feelings. No temper is more unbecoming to man,

or more offensive to God. Dust and ashes befit us, worms, beggars, sinners; yet we presume to hold our heads stiff and high, and to boast of our worth and dignity. “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.” If before God we should abase ourselves, among men we should be lowly, because we are their fellow-dependents and fellow-sinners. There is enough of guilt and vileness in every man’s conscience to make him tremble at the thought of Deity, and blush and bow his head in the presence of others. Yet pride is to many persons the special snare of Satan, the sin that keeps them out of the kingdom. They will not humble themselves as penitents at the mercy seat, neither will they put themselves on an equality with the mass of mankind as in one guilt and needing the same redemption.

Lastly, there is the malevolent eye—the angry eye with which Cain looked upon his brother: “Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.” The envious and jealous eye, which cannot bear a superior or a rival. “Is thine eye evil because I am good?” asked the lord of the vineyard; asks God, who distributes his gifts as it pleases him. The eye of settled hate and ill will, that watches for the occasion to do mischief. “Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire

thou his dainty meats: for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he. Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.” The mocking eye that despises just authority: “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.” The vindictive eye, kindling with rage. “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” Some men’s revenge is a hot blaze which suddenly bursts forth and consumes like the lightning. Others cherish a slow fire; they are implacable; they refuse to forget and forgive. These uncharitable tempers are the barriers to thousands in the way of life.

“And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.” Not the physical organ, for it has no moral quality, and, if extirpated, would leave the soul the same. Our duty is to make the right use of the eye, that we may behold the glory of God and adore. But the eye of covetousness, of sinful desire, of vain ambition, of pride, of wrath, causes us to offend; and this must not be spared. “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth”—that is, which are not heavenly in their use, which serve only this wicked and

perishable world. What are these members? The apostle enumerates them: “Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” Spare not these enemies of God and of your own peace, or “they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes,” and at last a quenchless fire of torments.

How men plead for the lusts of the flesh and of the soul! “Lord, this sin is so profitable to me; it is bringing me golden gains every day; I see a great fortune in it after a few years. Then I will be independent and respected, and have as much as heart can wish; I will be able also to help the poor and the Church.” “Pluck it out, and cast it from thee, though useful as a right eye or a right hand,” replies the Master. “Lord, this sin is so necessary to me. It is my bread; yea, bread for my wife and children. Shall I take the very bread out of their mouths, and see them want and starve, by giving up the only means I have to support them?” “It is written, Thou shalt not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ Who hears the ravens when they cry? Who stills their clamorous nest? Pluck out that evil eye and cast it from thee.” “Lord, this is my weak point, my darling sin, dear

to me as the apple of mine eye. It is my chief pleasure, the charm of life, the passion of my soul. Tear me not away from Delilah, whom I love, in whose bosom I comfort myself; bid me not give up Herodias, my brother's wife. Anything else will I do except this." "Pluck it out, and cast it from thee. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "Lord, I cannot live without society, without admiration, without the sweet breath of human praise. Dress and pomp and places of amusement, and whatever else belongs to fashion and style and honor in the world, are so fascinating to me, so essential to my enjoyment. Strip life of this brave show, and it will be bare and repulsive." "Pluck it out, and cast it from thee. Trample under foot such vain aspirations. All the glory of man is a fading flower, a fleeting shadow. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "Lord, I cannot give up my pride. It is a part of my nature; I can scarcely separate it, even in thought, from my very being. Surely I am not as other men are, not of the common herd. I keep myself aloof; I hold my head high; and whatever others may say or think, I intend to respect myself, and maintain my dignity and honor. I would be ashamed to

get down in the dust with humble confessions of guilt and suppliant pleadings for mercy, as though I were the vilest of the vile; not only could I not bear the derisions of the crowd, and specially of my old associates, but all the self-satisfaction which I have cherished in my secret heart for so many years would be broken forever by such humiliation.” “ Pluck out that eye of pride, and cast it from thee. I justify not the self-righteous Pharisee, but the penitent publican. For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility. Be ashamed of me, and I will be ashamed of you; but I dwell with the humble and contrite spirit.” “ Lord, I hate this man from the depths of my heart, and cannot endure him in my sight. He is my enemy. He is ever an obstacle in my path, a thorn rankling in my side. He has done me a grievous wrong; and though I do not intend to lay hands on him or to harm so much as a hair of his head, I can never, never be at peace with him.” “ Pluck out the evil eye of malice and revenge, and cast it from thee. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you: that ye may be the chil-

dren of your Father which is in heaven. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." "Lord, this sin has now become to me a fixed, inveterate custom, a second nature. If I were young, I could give it up; if I had my life to go over, I would avoid it. I will warn my youthful friends against it. But it has become in the course of years woven into my life, and it could not be torn thence without the utmost violence and pain. It would be tearing me from myself; it would be wrenching an arm from the socket, gouging out the sensitive eye. I mean no harm; I indulge in this practice not from any wrong motive, not to offend thee by sinning, but merely from the force of habit. It is now too late to reform. The custom has mastered me, and I have no choice, no power." "Pluck it out, and cast it from thee. The Lord is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity. Wilt thou cherish in thy bosom the deadly serpent that feeds upon thee, and grows stronger and more venomous, until thou art altogether ruined? Wash you, make you clean; crucify your evil inclinations and the habit which is so powerful; nothing unclean shall pass through

the gates of pearl, and stain the holy city whose walls are of jasper and whose streets are gold.” “Lord, I would gladly give up all my sins, and wholly follow thee; but there is one respect in which all my friends, all my patrons, yea, my family, oppose my own pious wishes. I cannot give up this practice lest I should grieve and surely offend them.” “Pluck out the fond spirit of yielding to others against God and thine own soul. If sinners entice thee, consent thou not. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. If the voice of friendship and of affection, though it be of thine own blood—aye, though it be of the one dearer than all others—tempt thee to commit sin, to neglect duty, reply with Peter and John: ‘Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.’ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” “But, Lord, this is such a small sin. I would not do anything very wicked. I am quite scrupulous, far more so than many who think themselves great saints and

pillars of the Church. But why should an ado be made about so little a matter? Surely I may be allowed this one trifle, and I shall not be held guilty.” “Pluck out that slight sin also, and cast it from thee. It is the old serpent who asks: ‘Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Ye shall not surely die.’ Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. If there be one plague spot on the body, the person is unclean, and must be healed and purified before he is fit for the congregation of the righteous: it is a spreading sore. Yea, you must hate even the garment spotted by the flesh; and the house in which the leprosy is must be broken down, the stones thereof, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and be carried out of the city into an unclean place. Try not to pluck a flower, however beautiful its color and sweet its odor, or a fruit, though mellow and golden-hued, which hangs on the very brink of sin and hell, lest thy head grow dizzy, and thy feet slip, and thou fall to rise no more. Keep far from the very appearance of evil.” But here comes the last man before the judgment seat of Christ to present his ex-

cuse: "Lord, I did not mean to give quarter to any sin. I desired to make my calling and election sure, and enjoyed a comfortable hope of eternal life; but while thy servant was busy here and there, this sin which I should have watched, escaped from my power, and lived. Be not wroth against thy servant." Then shall Christ reply: "So shall thy judgment be; thou hast decided it in the very confession of thy lack of vigilance and faithfulness. Did I not bid thee, 'Watch! be sober, be vigilant'? Did I not warn thee that, though the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak, and must with great pains be kept subject to conscience and active in duty? Didst thou not know the subtlety, the deceitfulness, the restless and unconquerable energy of sin? If I set thee the task of guarding sin that it do no more hurt, why wast thou so busy here and there, so much taken up heart and hands by other things, as to neglect this charge? Because thou hast let go out of thy hand this my enemy whom I appointed to death, thy life shall go for his life; sin lives, but thou shalt die."

Ye men of business who are skillful to cast up accounts and make close calculations, men of shrewd judgment in matters of profit, I submit to you a question: Is it profitable that you should enter into life maimed, or be cast entire

into the fires of perdition ? Will you give up sin and save your souls, or cleave to sin and lose your souls ?

Notice, then, that this offending eye keeps you out of life. "It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye." In Mark it reads: "It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye." By nature you are dead in trespasses and sins. "To be carnally-minded is death ; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace." Your body is alive, but your soul is dead. Sin lives in you, but you know not the true life. What is life according to the Scriptures ? It includes three things: the consciousness of God's favor, holy affections by which we partake of the divine nature, and the cheerful service of God in which this pure nature finds a high satisfaction and is more fully developed from day to day. This life, incomplete here, is perfected and expanded in heaven, and prolonged world without end, so as to be eternal life. Now, mark you, we enter into life maimed. We may have a painful sense of loss ; we may feel that we have made large sacrifices to become Christians. It is hard to give up the gains of profitable sin ; it is hard to give up the gratification of pleasurable sin ; it is hard to renounce the pride of life ; it is hard to forsake the old haunts,

the old employments, the old habits of sin. I do not promise that you will not miss, that you will not regret, that you will not hanker after these pleasing but forbidden things. I do not say that the pain will be over after the first struggle, after the resolve to abandon sin, or even so soon as the heart is changed by the Holy Spirit. I think that men sometimes make a mistake at this point, and it becomes to them afterwards a surprise and a snare. The pleasures of sin will continue to tempt, and the power of evil habits will continue to draw, though you enter into the kingdom. I know that if you once make up your mind to forsake sin, if you form a fixed purpose by the help of God, the difficulties in your way will not be half so formidable as to a wavering mind ; I know that the renewed heart to which are open other and purer joys receives a vast accession of moral power to resist the pleasures of sin ; I know that the gradual formation of good habits and growth in grace will make sin less and less attractive. At the same time I give you fair warning that you will enter into newness of life halt, maimed, or having one eye ; that you will feel, perhaps keenly, perhaps long, the loss of the world. You will experience a strong inclination to the old coveting, the sensual indulgence, the unlawful amusements, the

pride and vainglory, the intemperance of speech, the angry and vindictive passions, the self-will, which you are required to abandon. I would have you count the cost. I believe that many professing Christians find religion an easy matter simply because they have never plucked out and cast from them the evil eye; they have the name, but not the reality. There is a sort of liberty to do what seems good in your own eyes, an unrestricted pursuit of pleasure, a gratification of the natural bias of the heart, which you must renounce for life.

But notice further, you will not enter into heaven maimed. There will be no sense of loss, nothing painful, defective, imperfect, in the kingdom above. Death shall be swallowed up in victory; mortality shall be swallowed up of life. The spiritual man shall be complete and perfect, and complete and perfect shall be the adjustment of the heavenly state to satisfy all his longings with an unmixed and full delight. After the resurrection the body, no longer vile, but glorious, shall be likewise complete, perfect, immortal.

Courage, my soul; thy bitter cross,
In every trial here,
Shall bear thee to thy heav'n above,
But shall not enter there.

The cost, the hardships, the sacrifices, the conflicts

of religion will have ended forever; there will be no more self-denial and taking up the cross; and though we will still follow Jesus, it will not be through poverty and shame and sorrows; it will not be into the wilderness of temptation, to Gethsemane and Calvary and the tomb of Joseph, but into the joy which was set before him, and into which, having endured the cross and despised the shame, he has already entered, our Forerunner. He will lead us to living fountains of waters, pluck for us fruit from the tree of life, teach us to strike the golden harp to the noble melodies of heaven, and be our guide and companion up an ever ascending disclosure of the grandeur and glory of the divine works and perfections, in which the feet will never weary and the mind will never lose its freshness. The fruit of religion is eternal life, but the cost of religion is only a temporary struggle.

Here, then, is the first consequence of sparing the right eye—namely, you are debarred the kingdom; you are kept out of life, the life of holiness and God's favor now, the life immortal in the world to come.

But there is another consequence: Having two eyes, you will be cast into hell fire.

“Do you really believe that there is a lake of

fire into which unregenerate souls are plunged after death?" This question was seriously asked me. Well, friend, if you would know whether I believe the lake of fire to be a reality, an awful fact, or a mere fancy, a superstitious terror, an empty threat, I reply that I believe it to be a dreadful verity as fully as I believe heaven to be not an idle dream, but a glorious verity. I believe in everlasting punishment on the same authority which assures me of eternal life. I believe that at the last day Jesus, the Judge, shall say to those on his left hand: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Men may try to persuade themselves that God has not indeed placed cherubim and a flaming sword that turns every way to guard the tree of life against their sinful and presumptuous approach; that no judgment is appointed after death, and no fiery vengeance kindled for their eternal destruction; but they cannot blot out the plain testimony of the inspired word, neither can they altogether stifle the guilty fears in their own bosom.

But if you mean to inquire whether I believe hell to be literally a lake of fire and brimstone, or whether under this terrible physical image is suggested a more terrible spiritual reality, I do not hesitate to avow my conviction that the everlast-

ing punishment of demons and of lost human souls is a devouring and quenchless spiritual fire. The fires of hell are, indeed, only one of many figurative representations of their doom. I read of the bottomless pit, of the blackness of darkness, of a rain of fire and brimstone, of a horrible tempest, of chains, of the worm that dieth not, of the smoke of their torment that ascendeth forever and ever, of the cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God, of their being dashed to pieces like a vessel of clay smitten with a rod of iron, and torn to pieces as the body is rent and mangled by beasts of prey. I find some of these representations scarcely consistent with others, if interpreted literally, but perfectly harmonious if they be images of the spiritual woes of the damned.

These are all figures, only figures; but are they figures of fearful facts, of spiritual woes which are no figure, or are they figures of fancy, phantoms of the imagination, vain as dreams and visions of a fevered brain? When I imagine and describe heaven as a city of jasper walls and pearly gates and golden streets, in which is fixed the majestic and dazzling throne of God circled with a rainbow, through which rolls a river transparent as glass, whose trees hang with delicious fruit renewed every month and nourishing an unfailing

life, I speak only of images, not of the literal reality; but are they a fancy sketch baseless as airy castles built in idle musing amid the distant clouds, or are they noble images of nobler delights and of a dignity and glory more than of earth, beyond the telling of the tongue or the hearing of the ear or the seeing of the eye or the creation of the imagination, which God has actually in reserve for his children, and are adequate to satisfy the refined tastes, the vast capacities, the lofty aspirations of that spiritual nature wherein we resemble the Creator? So is the black picture of hell the awful shadow of an incomprehensible reality and woe.

Is it enough, then, poor soul, that hell is not a literal lake of fire to burn the flesh? Can you find any comfort, any refuge from your fears, any encouragement to sin in that fact? Is physical suffering the only suffering? Is there not a spiritual anguish more to be dreaded, harder to be endured, than any pains of this nervous organism? These pains affect the brute, affect the babe; they befall the innocent as well as the guilty, the honorable as well as the vile; but there is an agony of the soul which is the direct fruit and penalty of sin, of conscious guilt, worse than all the torture of the limbs. Is there not a burning shame? May

not the very heart be on fire with the sense of self-degradation and the merited scorn of our fellows? Has not remorse a tooth to gnaw, and does not its hunger keep forever all its keenness? May there not rage such a storm within the bosom as mocks at the petty storms of earth and sea and sky? Is not conscious crime a heavier, surer, more galling fetter than chains of iron and stocks of wood? Does not despair wrap the soul in a thicker, more horrible gloom than of deepest dungeon and darkest night?

I will tell you, friend, three elements of misery in hell which are not a figure, but naked truth. First, there is the conscious loss of heaven. You will be shut out in darkness, while within the hall is illumined, and the banquet is spread, and the sweet strains of music delight the ear, and the guests are unspeakably happy. You will see heaven afar off—I do not say that you will literally see it; not one ray of that glory may ever greet your eye, not one note of that melody may ever fall upon your ear; but you will know that yonder, far withdrawn, is the blissful land, and there the angels and spirits of just men made perfect are rejoicing in the presence of God; and you are cast out, and an impassable gulf is fixed between. Never will those gates be opened to your feet.

Who would lose forever that sweet, precious dream of eternal life in heaven ? Conscious need of happiness, the hunger and thirst of the soul, without any satisfaction for the craving, is the first element of the wretchedness of hell.

A second element is conscious guilt and sin. You will not be in hell by any necessity which you could not have avoided. You will not go thither unwarned. Memory will not be suspended, but act with tenfold greater power as the flesh is put off. All your willful disobedience, your cleaving to sin, your unbelief and impenitence, will be set in order before your eyes. This house of worship, this Sunday, this sermon, will be recalled. Thou shalt mourn at the last, and self-reproach, self-accusation, will be your torment.

The third element is despair. According to the Italian poet, over the black gate of hell is this inscription : “Leave hope behind who enter here.” Hope, the last friend and solace and strength of the friendless, the comfortless, the strengthless ; hope which lightens the heaviest burden, and makes the acutest suffering bearable ; hope which begins with thought and attends men to the last moment of life ; hope which comes to all who tread the earth, visits not those confined in the depths below.

There is one remaining feature with which I close this subject: “Than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Eternity! Mysterious word! Depth which the profoundest thought cannot fathom! Height which the soaring imagination cannot reach! Vastness without bounds, beyond all stretch of conception! Yet our minds are impelled by an irresistible impulse downward into this bottomless abyss, upward in feeble endeavor after this height that still towers in unapproachable loftiness, forward into this immensity, all-embracing, by naught save God embraced, for he filleth eternity.

Eternity! How shall we conceive, how speak of it? Not all the material universe would furnish atoms to serve as sands for the hourglass which shall measure it. Uniform, unchangeable, limitless eternity, how shall we name thee, born as we were on yesterday, changeful with each successive moment, hemmed in on all sides by barriers which shift their position and widen the range of our thought, but cannot be abolished? Yet we, creatures of time, whose life is a shadow on the grass cast by the swift sailing of a cloud across the disk of the sun, the foam and bubble on the effervescing cup which dissolves at the instant of

vision into emptiness—we are immortals, and soon must enter the eternity of changeless weal or woe.

“O Time!” sings the saint in glory, “thou swift of foot, who didst steal the bloom from the cheek, the luster from the eye, the elasticity from the step, the erect dignity from the form; thou who didst fade the flowers, and wither the grass, and disrobe the tree, and bring night upon the day and winter upon the summer of earth; thou who didst rob us of our riches, and quench the glory of our state, and tear from our arms dear friends and all whom we loved below; thou who didst crumble to dust the proudest monuments of human toil and genius, and shatter the fair and stately columns of liberty and of a nation’s greatness; thou who didst ever mock my hopes, end too quickly my fondest delights, and threaten to cut down my life with the sweep of thy all-destroying scythe whose edge was never dulled by constant use—O Time! I have escaped thee now, and laugh to scorn thy power, for immortality is mine. Secure, sinless, untempted, free from want and sorrow, blessed, glorified, deathless, I exult in the boundless expanse of an unchangeable eternity.”

“O Time!” groans the lost spirit in hell, “thou friend of the wretched, who didst turn the darkest night into day, the most dreary winter to spring

again; who to the sick restoredst health, and to the captive liberty; who didst soothe with healing balm every wound, however painful, cause fresh buds to put forth when others had been blasted, and by thy revolving wheel of fortune lift up those who had been cast down; thou who didst reduce by every pang the sum of our suffering, whisperedst cheering words of promise, and at the worst, though all other hope perished, comfortedst us by the thought of the grave where the oppressors cease to trouble and the weary are at rest—O Time! thou too hast fled me, and handed me over to this dread constancy of suffering, this arid desert without one spot of verdure or bubbling fount or drop of dew, and bordered by no happier region, this fixed, unalterable state in which I can find no change, no respite, no alleviation, not even the suspension of consciousness in sleep or swoon, not even the briefest diversion of tormenting memory and silence of reproachful conscience, where even death, the last resort of the miserable, shuns me, and, though I seek him eagerly, cannot be found; thou, Time, art no longer with me, and though on earth the clock still strikes the hours, and the shadow still moves upon the dial, and the stars reply to the watchman's question, 'What of the night?' and seasons come and go, and the old

year is rung out, and the new year is rung in, and men are born and die, and nations rise and fall, no relief, no good, no hope comes to me ; and though the earth should reel out of her course, and the heavens be on fire, and the sun be quenched, and the stars fall, and all nature fail, and thou too, O Time, shalt perish, yet I cannot cease with thee : I am left alone, with this pitiless, inexorable eternity, a blank without one vision of good, a silence without one voice of sympathy, a wretchedness which knows no end, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

“And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.”

V.

A SINGLE EYE.

“If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” (Matthew vi. 22.)

“**I**T grows dark. Light the lamps.” So speaks the sick man from his bed. But it is broad day, and the friends who wait on him know that he is struck of death. It is thus in the moral world: Men complain of lack of light, when the defect is only in the organ of vision. They grope at midday, and kindle the paltry tapers of human wisdom when the sun of revelation shines unclouded. They cry for more light, but their need is singleness of eye.

What is a single eye? Literally, it means that healthy state of the eye in which an object is seen single, and therefore clear and true. When the eye is evil or unsound, two or more images of the same object flit before the vision, and a vague, uncertain, blurred impression results. Figuratively, a single eye denotes a simplicity of soul which I will seek to describe.

First, a singleness of eye means a single-hearted love and search of truth.

Many men profess to seek the truth who are really in pursuit of something else, or, at least, are distracted between it and other objects. They do not search for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Some, like the men of Athens, spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. They are afflicted with itching ears, an idle, meddlesome curiosity which pries into matters that are either trifling or concern only other people. Life is wasted on questions of no profit, or else they are blown about by every wind of doctrine, ready to catch any strange notion. They seek novelty, not truth.

Some have minds like a show case, so contrived as to display all its goods to the best advantage; they parade all they know, and would rather seem than be wise. They seek reputation, not truth.

Some are unwilling to confess ignorance and mistake, but would nourish their pride on the fruit of the tree of knowledge. They prize and covet learning and wisdom not for their intrinsic worth, but as a means to power and eminence; allured, like Eve, with the serpent's promise, "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods;" lifted up, like Babylon, to whom God said, "Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou

hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me." They seek their own glory, not truth.

Some are not open to conviction, but virtually claim infallibility; they ask not to be set right, for they do not concede that it is possible for them to be wrong; they will not listen to Reason unless her voice accords with them. They seek to be confirmed in their own opinions, not truth.

Some have a disputatious spirit: they are always eager for controversy, to display their own logical skill and confute their opponents. They seek triumph, not truth.

Some think that truth is sectional or sectarian or aristocratic; they would be instructed, if at all, by persons of their own country, party, or social class; they despise wisdom if it is found outside these limits. With Nathanael they ask, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" with the Pharisees, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" They share the haughty, disdainful temper of the Jews who questioned the man to whom Jesus had given sight, until, confounded by his replies, they sought to seal his lips by the rebuke: "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" They cherish prejudice, not truth.

Some lend a quick ear to flattery, and swallow

every smooth and pleasant word, but are offended by painful truth. They are like Ahab, king of Israel, who said to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, “There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil;” like king Asa, who fell into a rage against Hanani, the seer, and thrust him into prison, that he might be silenced by violence until he should learn to conceal disagreeable things through policy. They seek praise and comfort, not truth.

There are men with the sensual and presumptuous spirit of those Pharisees who said, “Master, we would see a sign from heaven.” They fix their minds on some arbitrary mark by which the truth shall be recognized, or method by which it shall be communicated.. They would see a great light above the shining of the sun at noon, and hear a voice from heaven, as did Saul of Tarsus, in order to be convinced. They forget Lydia, the seller of purple, whose heart the Lord opened to attend unto the spoken word. They forget that for one oak which the lightning has riven the forest contains a thousand which the gentle light clothes with beauty, each in its own way feeling the touch of God’s finger; that for one Niagara with its thunder tones there are a hundred streams flowing smoothly to

the sea, each lifting its own voice in witness to the same creative hand.

There are men with the careless, caviling spirit of Pilate, who asked, “What is truth?” but waited not for a reply. These mockers have settled it in their own thoughts that there is no truth, but only its deceitful semblance; that truth is silent in our world, and what men hear is but an empty echo. They reject faith, and are content to eat, drink, and die.

There are men with the sullen, obstinate skepticism of Thomas, who would be glad to know the truth beyond all peradventure, and yet arm themselves in panoply against conviction. Thomas affirmed: “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.” They shut themselves up in their incredulity and fear of being deceived as in a powerfully fortified castle, and challenge God to storm and enter this citadel and capture them.

There are men who ask, like Nicodemus, “How can these things be?” Unless every problem is solved, every mystery cleared up to their satisfaction, they refuse to believe.

Opposed to all these tempers is the single eye, the humble, reverent, candid love of truth and

longing to be taught; a childlike spirit, conscious of ignorance and ready to confess it; inquiring not for the sake of vanity and pride, but simply to know; not expecting to learn all at once, but in different lessons and by slow degrees; exercising our own faculties to find out, and yet not trusting them as sufficient, but seeking guidance; not forming our own system how things should be, or how we desire them to be, and demanding that God's universe and revelation shall conform to our thoughts, but acknowledging the weakness of our understanding and willing to abandon our preconceptions for better information.

The office of the eye is not to create light, but to receive it; so the office of the mind is not to create, but receive truth. Simplicity of soul resembles transparent glass through which the sunshine streams in purity and power, not stained windows which obstruct a portion of the rays, and color those that are transmitted.

Secondly, singleness of eye implies a single-hearted devotion to duty.

How few pay to conscience full obedience! She speaks with authority to warn and command; you begin to hearken, but your ear is quickly assailed by many voices, low or loud, sweet or harsh, of promise or of threat. That course will beggar you,

and your children will starve ; it is unpopular, and will subject you to derision and scorn ; it is dangerous, and you will pursue it at the risk of life. “Look at these stones,” argues Hunger ; “you may turn them into bread, and eat, if you do not yield to foolish scruples of conscience.” “Throw yourself boldly in this direction,” calls Presumption, “and I will guarantee that you shall suffer no harm.” “The glory of the world is at your feet, if you will only worship me,” shouts Ambition. “Do you see the glitter of this gold?” asks Avarice ; “serve me, and I will give you all riches.” “Haste hither,” pleads Lust ; “I have decked my bed with tapestry, and perfumed it with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.” “The wine is red, the bowl sparkles,” hallooed Intemperance ; “here drown all your cares, and make your heart merry.” “This way,” sings Pleasure ; “do you not see the gay crowd and hear the steps of the dancers as they keep time to lively music?” “Follow me at all costs,” demands imperious Fashion ; “you might as well be out of the world as to be out of fashion ; who can bear to be laughed at?” “Listen to me,” whispers Vanity ; “everybody will admire and praise you.” “Hold your head high,” mutters Pride ; “you must respect yourself, or nobody will respect you.” “Blacken his reputation,” hisses

Envy ; “ he is in your way, and must be put out of it.” “ Strike ! ” cries Revenge ; “ he has wronged you, and revenge is a morsel fit for the gods.” How hard it is amid these confusing clamors to heed the still small voice of Duty ! Enter your closet ; hush every fear, passion, hope ; say, “ Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth ; ” then go forth in his strength to do his will.

“ Go, take that battery,” says the general to a subordinate officer. The feat seems almost impossible ; yet the soldier does not refuse, hesitate, nor falter. To do so would brand him a recreant and coward. Not to weigh consequences, but to execute the orders of his superiors, is his duty. If such is the fealty of the soldier to a human cause and commander, if in the late war thousands of our own men in obedience to authority moved onward to wounds, captivity, or death, unshrinking and unquestioning, should there not be a more absolute and absorbing, a sole regard to the voice of God ? There are other batteries than those which frown behind embankments, and hurl forth grape and canister, solid shot and bursting shell, to be despised by the soldier of duty ; he must be ready to withstand the power of public sentiment, of general example, of friendly solicitation, of mocking laughter and cutting jest and fierce denuncia-

tion and biting calumny, harder to be resisted than rifle, bayonet, and cannon ; he must fight the good fight amid perhaps not the applause, but the censure of his fellow-citizens, not always supported by ranks of brave comrades, but often single-handed and alone. Steadily advancing in the path of duty, he should be able to say, “ None of these things move me.”

Thirdly, singleness of eye implies a single-hearted consecration to the glory of God.

The child and every untaught man thinks, as once everybody thought, that the earth is the center around which not only the moon but all the planets and the great sun himself revolve. How different from the true order is a science of astronomy constructed on that hypothesis ! Let the sun occupy the center of the system, and around him let the earth, her sister planets, and their satellites be arranged, not only borrowing their several splendors from his intense and original fire, but gravitating toward him, and thus held in their proper places and moved in their respective orbits by his commanding influence ; then the plan and harmony of these worlds will be understood. So we grope and blunder in our attempts to explain the moral universe, or this unit in the uncounted aggregate of worlds, our own globe, because we make

self, or our home, or our age and land, not God, the central and controlling principle and end of all things. What a bungling and hopelessly tangled affair, “confusion worse confounded,” the world appears to him who thinks it should have prime reference to his comfort and convenience, to his pleasure and pride! Learn thoroughly the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples; begin with the petitions, “Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;” close with the doxology, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever;” and you will have attained unto that singleness of eye which fills the whole body with light. The Italian “mother and poet” who exulted as she bade her two boys go forth at the wheels of the guns, their eyes flashing with the love of country and of liberty which she had taught them, refused, when those sons fell in the hour and embrace of victory, to sing a song for Italy free; patriotic ardor being swallowed up in maternal grief.

Dead! One of them shot by the sea in the east,

And one of them shot in the west by the sea.

Dead! both my boys! When you sit at the feast,

And are wanting a great song for Italy free,

Let none look at me.

We cannot serve the Lord our God with such a

divided heart. No other love must be allowed to strive against the spirit of supreme devotion to the will and honor of our King. If he demand thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, without a murmur let Isaac be offered on Moriah. If judgment be pronounced on the house of old Eli, a judgment so severe that both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle, the sole response must be: "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." If Sabeans and Chaldeans, fire and wind, in swift succession destroy cattle, servants, sons, and daughters, let Job fall down and worship, saying: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." If the night before the cross has come, and the Son of man is stretched on the ground, and the blood of agony drops from his body, and the sorrow of death is in his soul, let his quivering lips say and repeat, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." Let no private want or grief or suffering, though we lie at the gate of the rich in rags, sores, and hunger, though we stand by the graves of our dead, though our eye grow dark and our strength fast fail us, interrupt the song, "Glory to God in the highest! Halleluiah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

1. You shall see plainly the great truths of God's word.

A scientist leads forth your boy into the open air by night, and, bidding him look up, asks, "What do you see, my son?" He sees the sky, the moon, and stars scattered here and there. "Pooh! you see nothing," replies the philosopher, contemptuously. "As I gaze through this telescope the spaces of the universe open, and worlds beyond counting crowd upon my view. How ignorant you are, and narrow in your notions!" But the boy enjoys the sight of the heavens and the moon and a number of nearer or larger stars, and these shed light upon his path; while those multitudinous and distant worlds appear to the man of learning only so long as he is peering through the glass, and do not help him to discern what is around him and to direct his way. The next day the scientist again asks the boy what he sees now. "Within the room I see my father and mother, a table, and a few chairs; without, the broad shining of the sun, the landscape and the sky." "What you see is not a hundredth part of what is actually about you. By the aid of this microscope I behold and study wonders and beauties of which you know nothing. How large, gorgeous in colors, and skillfully constructed is the insect which looks plain

and tiny to your eyes! That dust is a swarm of living creatures; this drop of water which you think pure and clear is a sea in which many animals swim and feed.” But your son gazes with smiling faith on his father’s face, and nestles fondly in his mother’s embrace, and walks out with confident step on the firm earth, undisturbed by his ignorance of the stars that are so remote and of the animalcules that are so minute. And if the scholar seek to perplex him by questions, such as, “What is light? How can the eye see? And how do you know that it is not deceiving you, as men have often been deceived by their senses?” the child may be unable to answer, but not the less he uses his eyesight to advantage, and trusts it boldly. So it is, I think, with many a single-minded believer who has slight acquaintance with the deep and subtle speculations of theologians, the wide learning and acute criticism of commentators, and the abstruse discussions of metaphysicians, but who does love the word of the Lord, and finds in it daily strength and comfort. To him are revealed things hid from the wise and prudent, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. He knows God in whom he lives, and who cares for him; and with childlike faith he cries, “My Father!” He knows Christ Jesus who loved him

and gave himself for him, and is able to save him evermore. He knows the Comforter who dwells in his heart, and fills him with peace, joy, and hope. As he reads the Holy Scriptures, there are many dark sayings which he cannot explain, many knotty problems which he cannot resolve; but he often hears and knows the voice of the good Shepherd, and with a glad heart follows on whithersoever he leads.

2. You shall see clearly the path of duty.

Very dark are the consciences of many people. They pervert with their glosses the plainest precepts of God's word. They profess to be governed by his law, and yet they allow themselves a license contrary to the first principles of truth, righteousness, and love. They devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer. They scrupulously pay tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, and neglect judgment, mercy, and faith. They compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and care not, so that he is gained to their Church, though he wallow in sin. They violate temperance, honesty, and brotherly love; and yet do not feel that they have done any great wrong. What is the explanation of these false notions? It is not lack of instruction, for some of them have been carefully taught, and are even themselves teachers of the

law ; nor lack of intelligence, for they are often sharp-witted. They see through the pretexts of other men. They would be quick and strong to expose and denounce such treatment toward themselves as they practice and justify toward others. The explanation is that their eye is evil. They look through a medium of lust and passion.

I'll no say, men are villains a';
The real, harden'd wicked,
Who hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricted :
But oh ! mankind are unco weak,
An' little to be trusted ;
If self the wavering balance shake,
It s rarely right adjusted.

Men often claim that their conscience has settled a question, when conscience has not been consulted, but covetousness, pride, ambition, resentment, self-will, or some other evil temper. And if they do not consciously follow these wicked inclinations, and suffer the punishment of felt guilt, conscience protesting and warning, though overborne, but pervert conscience itself, and get the sanction of that high faculty in their chosen course of wickedness, how great is the darkness ! They grow wanton, cruel, and obstinate in sin, and are not only unchecked by shame, remorse, and terror, but are even goaded on by conscience, persuading

themselves that they are doing God service. Even the light in them is darkness; the power that should witness for right confirms them in iniquity. But if your eye be single, if you seek candidly and earnestly to know God's will that you may do it, if you hold all your powers in readiness for his service, unseduced by any promise of gain or pleasure, undeterred by any threat of loss or suffering, then the law of the Lord will be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path, and you will walk wisely, safely, and peacefully.

3. You shall read wisely and to edification the book of Providence.

I catch the reply: "Providence is to me a sealed volume. I have studied it diligently, but in vain; I have listened to able and eloquent sermons on this subject, but they have failed to clear up the mystery." Ah, friend, no learned and profound discussion will give you understanding, unless you have simplicity of heart, a spirit modest, humble, adoring. Take the shoes from off your feet, when you would stand on holy ground, and gaze on the divine glory.

Approach not with irreverent curiosity. There are many things which it does not concern you to know. "Lord, and what shall this man do?" asked Peter touching the destiny of his fellow-

servant John. “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.” You need not a prophetic view of the future; study to do your own duty.

Be prepared to meet difficulties which cannot be removed at present, but will be made clear in the development of God’s vast plans. “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” Many things were unintelligible for ages whose meaning is plain to us. The cross was the blackest of mysteries to the horror-struck and weeping disciples; it seemed beforehand the most improbable of all events in the administration of the wise and righteous God; yet now it is the only light by which to interpret the history of the ages before Christ, and the only hope of the world for all the ages to come.

Maintain a lowly sense of your own limited capacity to comprehend the great things of God, and an adoring sense of his glorious perfections, uncreated, transcending all thought. The very power to inquire you owe to his grace; and he gives you a little light to fill and employ your mind, as he gives a few grains to the bird for his sufficient feast and a few drops of water to the animalcule for his sufficient range; but these do not limit his harvest and his presence. “O the depth of the riches both

of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Be not overhasty, but learn something of the patience of God, in whose sight a thousand years are but as yesterday. The psalmist accused himself of being stupid as a beast in wondering at the prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of the godly. When he went into the sanctuary, he saw the end of the boastful persecutors; their pride and power were as slippery places on the edge of a deep abyss, their joy as the laughter of a drunken man ere he is dashed to pieces against the rocks far below.

Above all, get rid of a sensual and selfish disposition. It is not our reason which cries out against God, but our lusts and passions which he commands us to crucify. We are not confounded by the troubles which have befallen other men, though they were far better than we, and their sorrows far heavier than ours. We can understand how tribulation wrought in their characters its perfect work of tested and approved excellence, and crowned them with unfading glory; but if want and pain and grief overtake us or ours, we cry out at the mystery that we should be treated thus. Who, then, are we that dare to complain? Beggars who

owe to divine goodness and forbearance every breath we draw, and yet are made heirs of the wealth and joys of heaven; sinners who have been snatched from the jaws of destruction by the sacrificial death of our Lord and Saviour, and made joint heirs of his glory. It is not the flood which swept away the whole race except eight souls; not the successive scourges which were inflicted on the chosen people, and their present scattered and peeled condition, not the chains, lash, and cruel death endured by the early disciples of Christ; not the long night of many nations and the blotting out of others, that try our faith; but the disappointment of our hopes, the overthrow of our plans, the hardships of our people. We look not at God's glory; we do not appreciate God's great scheme of human redemption; we seek not with all the heart God's kingdom.

There are simple-hearted men whom the dealings of Providence do not bewilder and confound. They do not require that God shall give them an account of his ways. They presume not to sit in judgment on his government. They seek to discover and lay to heart those lessons of duty and piety which their righteous King and loving Father would teach them by his chastisements and mercies. Faith reveals a plan of infinite wisdom

where unbelief is perplexed with an objectless disorder. That God is just, man guilty, and good brought of evil ; that pride needs to be abased, desire chastened, passion restrained, and all the virtues cultivated by affliction ; that the day of judgment has not yet come, the awards of eternity have not yet been distributed—these few grand truths they have seized with firm grasp, and they apply to the mystery of his dealings ; and thus a flood of light is poured on this obscure and complex problem. One great purpose they see running through all the ages—the building up of a glorious Church of redeemed men as the habitation of God. To the eye of sense there is a bewildering confusion ; to the ear of sense, an unmeaning hubbub and din ; laborers running to and fro, the air filled with babbling voices and noisy clamors, rude and destructive agencies at work, the loud blast of gunpowder, the *stridor* of the saw, the ponderous blows of the mallet, the sharp click of the chisel ; piles of rubbish strew the ground, and clouds of dust choke the air, the fragments and powder of materials once thought fit for use, but rejected by the Master ; but out of the quarry rock is being hewn, and living stones are shaped, smoothed, and polished for a spiritual temple ; Christ the foundation, its area the world, its gates salvation, its walls resounding

with the high praises of God every hour from the rising to the setting, from the setting to the rising sun; the entire edifice redolent with perfumes from ten thousand burning censers, ablaze with diamonds, rubies, and all manner of precious gems, hallowed by the glory of the divine presence, not in symbol, but in reality, even by the Spirit of holiness and comfort. Toil on, ye multitude of builders, each in his own place and day, though you do not understand the whole plan and symmetry as these are in the mind of the Architect, though you shall not live to see the work completed, and though much of your labor seems to be for naught. Strike the cymbals, sound the trumpets, let the organs peal forth their grandest music, let the people of the Lord lift their voices with one accord in joyous praise, let generation after generation, land after land, catch and swell in ever-growing numbers the song which burst forth at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, until the faith and hope which anticipate the finishing of this holy temple after its original design shall turn to vision, when the headstone shall be lifted to its place amid the shoutings of an innumerable company, “Grace, grace unto it!”

VI.

WASHING THE HANDS AND COMPASS- ING THE ALTAR.

“I will wash my hands in innocence: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.” (Psalm xxvi. 6.)

WHAT is here denoted by the hands? by washing the hands in innocence? by compassing the Lord’s altar with clean hands?

I.

1. Each man may be regarded a kingdom in himself; then the hands represent the administrative department. It is the office of the eye to inspect, of the ear to receive the reports, of the tongue to publish, of the feet to furnish transportation, of the hands to execute. The eye reveals the heart; the hands reveal the will. The one shows feeling; the other, determination. If desire is awakened, if passion is kindled, you see them in the eye; when the will has decided, then comes action, and the hands are the actors. Scarcely anything is done which they do not. The hands represent the power that is in man. By them he is enabled to accomplish his purposes. Even the power of God is figuratively called his mighty and outstretched

hand; in that hand are our breath and our times. They represent his skill as well as his strength. "The firmament showeth his handiwork." "The heavens" are "the work of his fingers." Of all the members of the body, the hand alone is peculiar to man, one of the signs and instruments by which he is distinguished from the brute creation and elevated to headship over the world. If a few other animals have what may be called a hand, it is a poor mimicry of the human member. This, consisting of the broad palm to hold and the slender fingers to grasp, by its shape, its many, supple, yet firm and strong articulations, and its delicate touch, is admirably suited to its important uses. Brutes may toil, man alone is capable of work; and the hand is the workman. Brutes perform instinctive acts, man alone is capable of high deeds; and the hand is the doer. It wields the heavy hammer, plies the fine needle, and makes the swift shuttle fly; it fells the forest, digs the mines, and hews the quarry; it sows the seed, mows the grass, and reaps the grain; it weighs and measures; it grasps the sword, guides the plow, moves the pen, and sets the type; it shifts the sails of the ship, and guides the wheels of the engine; it gathers the winds to whirl the mill, arrests the idle wandering of the stream to grind for man—another

Samson blind and fettered, but not shorn of his strength—holds down or unlooses the steam, more potent and serviceable than the genii of Eastern story, and, finding fault with the tongue and foot, substitutes the lightning as a messenger. The hand is the artist of the beautiful, as well as the useful artisan. The eye and ear enjoy the beauties and harmonies of nature, but only the hand can create. It rears the flower, trains the vine, and transforms the waste into a lovely landscape. By its construction and its touch, dumb, senseless matter—brass, wood, strings, membranes—becomes instinct with human sentiment and passion, and, many-voiced, utters soul-moving strains, a simple melody, a harmony of diverse and complex sounds, a grand symphony in which many instruments combine, sublime as thunder tones, sweet as the notes of the nightingale, not unworthy to be the accompaniment of the hallowed songs of Zion, type of the harps of heaven. At its touch, plain, coarse canvas glows with all the tints of the rainbow, shows the most delicate tracery of leaf or spider's web, lives with the manifold life of nature, fixes in changeless beauty the fleeting charms of the hours and seasons, Aurora's dewy freshness, the meridian's full-orbed splendor, the crimson glory of the setting day, the bursting buds of spring,

the golden bloom of summer, the ripe richness of the autumn, and winter's snowy mantle; youth also there retains every lovely hue and feature, incapable of age or death. At its touch the cold, hard rock grows flexible, pliant as the folds of a lady's robe, graceful as the perfect human form, warm as with the warmth of a beating heart beneath, with lips that breathe and soul-expressive face, and posture of repose, or movement of pain or pleasure, of desire, passion, will. Strong as well as cunning, under its control mighty stones are piled like mountains, and pierce the sky with sharp point whence many "centuries look down" on brief-lived man; marble columns rear their heads in simple majesty unadorned or Corinthian wreathed, and the vaulted dome soars proudly aloft a miniature heaven.

As innocence and guilt specially reside in the will, and as the hands are the ministers of that spiritual faculty, with them more than with any other part of the body is morality concerned. They are made to serve the Creator, and are capable of such service; but man has yielded them to become members of unrighteousness unto sin, and they are kept busy at the devil's work. At Satan's forges they hammer out not the plowshare, but the sword; they sharpen not the useful needle, but the

bayonet's murderous steel ; they cast not the anchor and the engine, but guns of war. At Satan's stills they bruise and ferment the luscious crops of fruit and the nutritious harvests of grain which bountiful Providence yearly bestows for human comfort and subsistence into fiery poison which destroys both soul and body. At Satan's hells they throw the cards which, by chance, skill, or craft, rob the innocent wife and children of their daily bread, madden the simple with disappointed hopes and loss of fortune and of character, and fill the bloated pockets of men too idle to work or too greedy to be content with righteous gains. At Satan's presses they turn off with the rapidity of steam power not the word of the Lord, which is pure, converting the soul and making wise the simple, not true and wholesome literature, but periodicals, pamphlets, books full of lies, corrupt, inflammatory, poisoning not the blood, but mind and heart. In Satan's halls for sinful pleasure they use all their skill to adorn with tapestry and carved work and gilding and coloring and paintings and statuary, and to bewitch sense and soul with melody, luring men, women, youth, maidens, and even little children into the devil's hands that he may do with them what he pleases. The hands clutch at bribes and at the wages of iniquity ; they took the price

of the Saviour's blood, dragged him off to judgment, and nailed him to the tree. They smite and tear and slay, and drip with brother's blood. The hands rob and steal; the hands deal unjust weight and measure; the hands apply the torch to the home and storehouse; the hands mingle strong drink, lift the cup, and put the bottle to the neighbor's lips. What is there wrought of mischief in this world in which the hands do not bear a part?

He who has clean hands is an angel or a babe. Well might he be pronounced faultless, perfect, whose hands on searching and faithful inspection should be found without stain of wrong or vice. Indeed, as the will, the intent, gives character to the deed, as this spiritual element enters into the manual act and forms part of it—yea, its soul, its life—and as every man is of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually, he must be wholly idle not to sin with his hands; and if this were possible, still the idleness itself would be sin, for the hands should be employed in duty and holy service. Sometimes the heart and hands are joined together in one phrase to denote the inward prompting spirit and the outward conforming life. “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart.” Here the hands

stand for the acts ; and purity of heart is added to show that the external and apparent deeds are a true expression of the blameless, harmless, devout feelings and intents of the inward man. The hands are frequently used to signify the whole of human ministry, though they be not specially employed : thus the Lord commanded Israel by the hand of Moses. They are used also to include the spiritual intention. Thus Abimelech, defending himself for having taken Sarah, Abraham's wife, says : “ Said he not unto me, She is my sister ? and she, even she herself said : He is my brother ; in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.” His hands were innocent because he knew not that she was another man's wife.

2. I have said enough to explain the word “hands.” Let us now inquire into the meaning of the resolve : “ I will wash my hands in innocency.”

Washing the hands may be a protestation of innocence. In Israel when a man was found slain in a field, and the murderer could not be detected, the priests went to the nearest city, a heifer's neck was stricken off in an uncultivated piece of ground, and all the elders of that city washed their hands over the beheaded animal, and solemnly said : “ Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have

our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them." So Pilate, the Roman governor, who did not desire the death of Jesus, but had not courage to withstand the clamorous Jews, "took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us and on our children." O weak, yielding Pilate, did the absolution of the multitude silence an accusing conscience? did that water wash from your fingers the innocent blood? will they not show the crimson spots in the resurrection morn? will so flimsy a plea be accepted at the judgment seat of Christ?

Ye men of my congregation, some of you may dream to wash your hands of guilt on as slight a pretext as that of Pilate, saying that you did not the wicked deed, though you abetted or consented. But is this innocence in the sight of God? "Though you wash yourself with snow water, and make your hands never so clean," yet will the righteous Judge "plunge you in the ditch, and your own clothes shall abhor you."

Friends, one and all, we are fellow-sinners, each

man convicted by his own conscience, each weighed in the balances of God and found wanting. There may be crimes at the thought of which we shudder, not with conscious guilt, but with abhorrence; and we are glad to lift our hands before earth and heaven, and protest that we are innocent of these deeds, innocent of them even in thought and intention. But who of us can raise his hands before the All-knowing, and affirm absolutely that they are clean? “In thy sight shall no flesh living be justified.” “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”

How, then, shall guilty, fallen men wash their hands in innocence? When the record is once made in the books of God, how shall it be erased? When the stains of guilt have been contracted, how shall they be cleansed away? When the heart is defiled, how shall it be purified? and until we are pure within, how can our lives be holy?

The gospel answers: The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all unrighteousness; the renewing of the Holy Ghost purifies the inmost nature; to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, power from on high is granted with watchfulness and prayer to keep themselves in the fear and love of God all their days. First of all, we have redemption through

his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. David understood well the need of pardoning mercy. He sings not the blessedness of those who know not sins; only in angel lips is such a song befitting; but, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

Behold this day the sacred symbols of your redemption, the signs and seals of the covenant of grace, the body which was broken, and the blood which was shed for you. “For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

How is the atoning blood applied? To the penitent and believing soul. “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance”—confession of sins, humiliation, amendment, where possible restitution or reparation, suppliant pleadings for mercy. Not penance, but repentance, God requires; not paying money, for money will not buy pardon; not chastisements of the body, whether self-imposed or inflicted by others, for these do not atone; but whatever of pain and mortification is involved in confession, breaking off from your evil course, abasing yourselves, repairing as far as may be the wrong.

Believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, crucified for us, is your only, your sufficient hope and safety; look to be saved not by any merit in yourselves, not of grace independently of a divine sacrifice, but by the cross alone, by his blood which is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

O blessed fountain for guilt and uncleanness! precious drops, not of water, but of blood, which can cleanse the most polluted hands until they are whiter than snow, and restore the peace of innocence to consciences burdened with crime! only hope of the guilty, only life to those whom the righteous law condemns to die! how many souls spotted with not one, but a thousand crimes, whose guilt was scarlet ingrained, thieves, drunkards, adulterers, murderers, have washed at this fount, and gone away purified and radiant! How many who approached with sad, shame-bowed, fearful faces have gone away justified, happy, exultant! How many whose feet had well-nigh taken hold on hell were pulled out of the fire, already scorched as with the flames of the bottomless pit; have gone straightway from this atoning blood, as the thief on the cross, up to the glories of paradise, their robes so pure and shining that they would not stain the holy city, their hands so washed that they were fit

to grasp the hands of angels and the harps of gold, their lips so hallowed by a living coal from the altar that they were worthy to raise celestial melodies! Let that precious blood as of a lamb without spot or blemish fall this hour on our guilty souls, and we too shall be clean.

The blood of Christ purges us from our old sins; the baptism of the Holy Ghost washes the impure heart. “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” If you would have a clean heart, it must be a new creation, and none but God can create it. David prayed to be renewed, because he had been made pure before, and had fallen. “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.”

Behold the symbol of this spiritual washing in the sacrament of baptism. The baptized renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil: the water is the sign of the Spirit poured forth to cleanse and renew. “John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence,” promised our ascending Lord. “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance,” said John, the forerunner; “but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”

“Ye must be born again.” God gave unto the Gentiles also the Holy Ghost, said Peter, “and put

no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” Faith in him who changes the heart is the one condition of washing the hands in innocence. There is something different from, far more and better than, educating and drilling oneself into religion by daily repetition of pious acts, than the gradual formation of a habit of devotion instead of a habit of worldliness; it is the quickening of the dead in trespasses and sins by the power of the Holy Ghost given unto us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Descend upon us from heaven, thou water of regeneration, thou fire of purifying and refining, Spirit of the living God, promise of the Father; and make us every whit clean!

Yet, dear brethren, young converts and older believers, there is more to be done. By watchfulness, by prayer, by the word of God, by the assembling of yourselves together, by daily resistance to the flesh, by self-denial and cross-bearing, ever looking unto Jesus, ever asking for the help of the Spirit, you must keep yourselves without spot or blame in the midst of a corrupt generation, cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God.

II.

“I will wash my hands in innocence: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.”

There were two altars in the old tabernacle and temple, one for sacrifice and one for incense. The altar was the most important part of the sanctuary; hence compassing the altar represents the whole of worship. Literally and strictly we have no altar under the new and everlasting covenant in the blood of Jesus. There is no sacrifice save the one offering of Jesus, the Lamb of God, forever consummated and accepted. There is no priest to interpose between us and the Father, save one High Priest, one Mediator between God and man. The shadow has fled; the substance abides. “We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle;” and the victim on this altar is Jesus, who, “that he might save the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” This death we continually show forth in the sacrament of the Supper. We have a worship also, not the old one of costly and typical and burdensome ceremonies, but rational, simple, spiritual. “By Christ therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.” Hence we speak of the altar of public prayer, and of the home altar (would that every family had one!), and every man should have his own private altar, his own sacred closet, the inward retirement, where he may commune with

God, and bring the sacrifice of a broken spirit and the incense of grateful and adoring praise.

Now the great truth which the text teaches is the necessity of putting away all sin if we would worship God acceptably. “For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.” A hundred times is this truth repeated in the clearest and most impressive language, and still multitudes, profane, presumptuous, compass God’s altar with impure hearts and unclean hands, and dare to ask and hope for his blessing. “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” “Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness.” Yet men have served and do serve at the altar whose hands are defiled with covetousness, with intemperance, with licentiousness, with every form of sin. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. . . . And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands

are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;" or "without wrath and disputing." "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

O God of infinite holiness, who hatest sin, before whom all hearts are naked and opened, and from whose eyes nothing can be hid, on what a spectacle dost thou look down this day which thou hast sanctified! Thousands of pretended worshipers lift their hands to thee in secret or in the congregation of thy saints, and those hands, thus exposed to heaven, are defiled with filthy lucre, with unjust gains, with money held back from the righteous owners, with money of which thy treasury and the poor are robbed, and even now those hands itch and clutch after the mammon of unrighteousness more than they seek thy blessing. They spread

forth their hands in the light of thy countenance, and those hands are reeking with the foulness of the brothel or of the secret chamber of seduction, and even now they tremble and thrill with carnal lust. They stretch out their hands to take the sacred bread and wine from thy table, and those hands are filthy with gluttonous feasts at which they have surfeited and tremulous with the strong drink with which they have debauched themselves, and even now they are impatient to seize the bread of gluttony and lift to their lips the cup of drunkenness. They bring in their hands gifts to thine altar, and a lie, not to men, but to the Holy Ghost, is in those hands; for, like Ananias and Sapphira, they pretend to be sincere, but keep back a part of the price, and that which is most valuable, the spirit of consecration, and they begrudge the part they give. How many hands are upraised which drip with blood, murderous like Cain, for every one that hateth his brother is a murderer, and we know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him; yea, even now those hands clinch with wrath if the thought of the offending person enters the mind. How many have hands fresh from the waters of baptism who, like Simon the sorcerer, would make a traffic of the gift of the Holy Ghost, supposing that gain is godliness, and even at this hour they

are reaching after the praise and profits of the world. How many like Judas sit at the table with Jesus and dip their hands with him into the dish, and take the bread, who even in that act conceal their treachery, of whom the Son of man may say, “But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table!” Thou seest all, and yet thou dost not strike them down with the red bolts of vengeance; thou dost not send fire from heaven to consume these daring sinners! But the day approaches that burns like an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, worthless, withered, inflammable stubble, amid which shall run the hot flames of thine anger, and they shall kindle and perish. “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

But let me not sit down before speaking one word of comfort to that man, poor and contrite of spirit, who trembles at God’s word. Art thou afraid to draw nigh to the holy altar? Know that it is only unrepented, unconfessed, unforsaken sin that is a barrier between fallen man and God. Did Jesus repel the touch of the woman who was a sinner? Did Jesus reprove the prayer of the dying

thief? Did Jesus refuse mercy to the persecuting Saul? Did he not come from heaven to seek the lost, to call sinners to repentance, to save his people from their sins? Ye blessed angels who do always behold the face of God in heaven, not for you is this table prepared to-day; for ye have never sinned. Ye spirits of just men made perfect who worship in the temple not made with hands, not yours is this feast of which we shall soon partake; for ye have washed your robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and gone up through great tribulation, and are forever free from sin and sorrow and temptation. Guilt draws near to-day, covered with confusion of face, weeping tears of contrition, venturing no word of excuse; guilt approaches not unwelcome, not unbidden, to eat the broken body, to drink the shed blood, the price of our redemption. Happy, angelic family of God's dear children who have never strayed, not for you has the fatted calf been killed, and are the best robe and the ring and the shoes brought forth to-day; yet you also shall share the song of praise and rejoicing; the door opens to receive a band of wanderers, the Father leads them in, all the holy angels greet them. Drop now forever those torn and sin-soiled garments, put on now, ye ransomed of the Lord, your beautiful

robes, that the shame of your nakedness may not appear, and henceforth go in and out with the confidence of the sons of God, clad in the righteousness of faith.

“ Ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort, and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.”

VII.

BROKEN CISTERNS.

“Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” (Jeremiah ii. 12, 13.)

THE sin of which God in the text expresses such horror is this, that men seek their satisfaction elsewhere than in him. It is a double crime and folly; for all sin is also folly, as hurtful to the soul, as wicked against God. They forsake the fountain of living waters, the infinite and eternal source of all good; and with great pains they hew out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. They prefer vanities to the living God, their own fabrication to the Creator who is blessed forever.

The persons thus charged with a crime so monstrous, so dreadful, that the heavens should look on with astonishment, and the earth shudder and grow desolate with terror, are divisible into two chief classes: (1) Those who attempt to live without God, without any sort of religion; (2) those who invent a sort of religion, rejecting that which

is revealed in God's word—the simple truth as it is in Jesus.

I. I begin with the atheists, the men and women who have no God. They are a numerous class in this Christian country—aye, in this Christian city; I fear that I must add, not a few of them are in this present congregation. Do you wonder that I should suspect any portion of this respectable audience of atheism, the extreme of impiety? There are many subdivisions under this general head of atheists, many shades of difference in opinion, spirit, life. There is the disputatious, scornful atheist. He is bold and forward to avow his unbelief; he is zealous to undermine all faith in God, and leave the world creedless, without a worship, without hope, without a divine law; he jests and scoffs at everything sacred as a silly superstition. I am persuaded that not one such person sits before me to-night. There is a second class of atheists, men who have no wish to assail the Christian faith, to propagate their own unbelief; they are very quiet, cherishing their opinions secretly, and interfering with nobody. Perhaps not even one of these is in this house to-night, not one theoretical atheist. But there is a third and very large class who are without God in the world, practical atheists. “The fool hath said in his heart,

There is no God:” it is the expression either of a doctrine, There is no God; or of a purpose, I will have no God. They are like Gallio, caring for none of these things. Their feeling, or want of feeling, may be thus interpreted: “Whether there be a God, whether the Bible be true, we will not dispute, we will not be at the trouble to inquire. About this whole subject of religion, we know nothing, and care nothing. We are content to give it no thought, and to let come what will. We are of the world, and only ask to be let alone by preachers and professors of religion of every sort.”

To these godless men and women, aye, to these godless youths and maidens, I address myself at this hour. I do not accuse you of what the world calls crime; I do not charge that you have thrown aside a decent garb of morality, and suppressed all humane sentiments: you may stand fair in circles of business and of society: but I do say that you are utterly godless, atheistic, irreligious. The element of piety you seek to eliminate entirely from your nature. God is not voluntarily in all your thoughts; the only effort of your mind is to banish him. There is not one act in which you acknowledge him; neither in prayer, nor praise, nor thanksgiving. The laws of the land, the laws

and usages of society, you respect ; but there is no divine authority, no divine law, no divine standard of right and wrong, to which you bow. You ask not the guiding eye, the protecting shield, the bountiful hand of the great King ; nor do you deprecate his wrath. You look not forward to a day of judgment, nor think of One who even now searches the inward intention and weighs it in the balances of perfect purity. To you there is no world to come, no immortality ; and holiness, the perfection of your own nature in conformity to the will of God and after the pattern of his absolute perfection, is to you no aim, but only an idle word, a bit of cant, or a fanatical notion of religious people.

I charge, then, that you have forsaken God. What have you instead? Self and the world. You are your own center: to please yourself, not to glorify God, you make the end of existence. And the object of your desire and seeking is the world—the whole of it, let us say, or as much as there is any possibility of your acquiring ; while your actual satisfaction is the little of the world you can get and hold. Discarding faith, you are creatures of sense. Rejecting from your calculations the eternal hereafter, you of choice fix the grave as the farthest boundary of all your en-

deavor and all your hope. You deny the spiritual and divine, the supernatural; this material globe, and the overhanging firmament which gives you light, are your sole portion.

Alas! how are you better off than the beasts that perish? Scarcely more exalted are your pleasures and aims, and you expect after a few years to lie down with them in common extinction of consciousness. Now examine, my godless hearer, what you have done. You have, of your own accord, cut yourself off from the God and Father of us all—from the original, ever-living, inexhaustible fountain of all happiness, free to every one who will seek him; you have surrendered as a worthless thing all interest in God. This is your first act. It is throwing away your birthright. Next, you have at great cost and pains hewn out cisterns. This expresses the artificial character of the life and pleasures of the worldly. They are not content with the simple joys which God has ordained, but invent many false ways. In fact, they have lost all true peace of mind by forsaking the Lord and holiness, and are restless in devising many substitutes. These man-built cisterns also imply that you do not receive your good in prayer and gratitude from the fountain, but depend wholly on your own wisdom and strength. You have hewn

out cisterns, and to fill them is a hard and wearisome task. To carry out your own plans, whether to make money, or to seize power, or to win praise and honor, or to build up a family, or to enjoy a round of festivity and mirth, demands no slight tension of mind and heart and muscles. Cisterns, wherein the water soon loses its purity, its freshness, its sweetness to the palate and the fitness to maintain life, and becomes stagnant, corrupt; for the pleasures of sin are often felt to be stale and profitless. They pall upon the taste, and even become offensive; while the joys of virtue and piety, like living, flowing waters, fresh from the fountain, are always pure and sweet. Broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Men's schemes to lay up for themselves earthly good often fail, through defect of wisdom or mischance. The accidents of life which break up all these plans to acquire, or the fortunes which have been made, are innumerable, and cannot be effectually guarded against by our utmost prudence. Health may break down, and there is a mighty leakage of present and prospective comfort. Successive deaths in the family are violent openings through which happiness pours forth, like water on the ground not to be regathered. There are seasons of drought when these worldly cisterns become low, and run dry; and

there is an inevitable drain and waste which goes on every hour, in life itself, in the capacity of men to acquire and enjoy, and in the outward, changeful world.

O godless, worldly man or woman, inspect these works of your own head and hand—these broken cisterns, with their small capacity, which you try to fill with infinite care and weariness, in which the water soon becomes stagnant and offensive, which are ever breaking and emptying despite all your precautions against accidents, despite all your efforts to keep them in repair. Yours is an ignoble and unsatisfactory life; for you propose to yourself no high and worthy aim. You are the victim of many pains and sorrows, for which you find no solace, no compensation; you only summon what fortitude you can command to bear them as unmitigated but necessary ills. You often meet with disappointments which crush your spirits and your hopes. You anticipate the future of this present life with unrelieved anxieties and fears; for everywhere are uncertainty and peril, and your only trust, yourself and luck, is evidently a fragile reed. Your entire fortune, in hand and in hope, is this life, a troubled life at best, insecure each moment, sure to end in a few short years; and these precious moments, the sands of life, each

more precious than a diamond, are steadily flowing out, flowing out, never to be recovered.

Such is the man of the world, the man without God, even as he must describe himself. You say: “With this portion I will be content. I take the world that now is, the world in which I live, the world I see, hear, and handle, for my all. I take not indeed the whole world, for I cannot get it, nor could I use it; I take not all I desire and could turn to profit if I had it, for I am not able to lay hands on so much, and a part of what I once acquired has slipped away; I take whatever fraction of the world I can seize and retain by my own skill and power, and the aid of chance, the only god I know; I take it with its drawbacks—sickness, bereavement, losses, anxieties, the infirmities of old age if I live long enough, and many other evils; I take it to-day and to-morrow, and so many days as I may happen to live. I believe in nothing purer, loftier, more abiding; I will desire and seek naught else. Then I will lie down and die, having exhausted all pleasure and hope; and thenceforth darkness, corruption, worms, unconsciousness, oblivion, shall be all that remain of me.”

Such is your portion, a most beggarly one, even as you promise it to yourself. But there is more and worse to be said. You were made for God

and immortality ; and though you may attempt to degrade and mutilate your own nature and rank, and to choose the lot of a mere animal, a creature of sense, yet you are something grander, higher in the scale of being, of larger capacities for weal or woe, of endless duration whether it be happy or wretched; for it has pleased the Creator so to ordain. There are cravings which the world cannot satisfy, and though you disregard them, they remain to torture you with the eternal sense of a need unsupplied. There are faculties you may neglect or pervert, but they are essential to your being, and will cause you an anguish with which the pain of a dislocated limb, a disordered organ, an injury to the nervous organization, cannot compare. Despite all your efforts to get rid of conscience, conscience survives, inseparable, immortal. You may lull it with opiates, but now and then it will wake from sleep, it will arouse from delusive dreams and visions, it will recover sensibility ; and the agony of a guilty conscience is hell in the heart. You may try to be only a creature of the dust, soon to return to dust, and forget the spirit that shall return to God ; to be only of the earth earthy, without one heavenly aspiration ; to circumscribe thought by the narrow horizon of this present time, and never let imagination go be-

yond on daring wing into the dark and boundless hereafter; to believe only in the visible, in facts which the senses apprehend, without a conception of an originating, sustaining, governing will; but the reason can less be content with so low and narrow a range than the eagle in a cage—the eagle that pines and chafes to build on the mountain top and sail beyond the storm; for the reason of man is urged by a more imperious necessity to outsoar the most towering heights of the material universe and of all finite spirits in search of God; and while man, the master, may fetter down and imprison the proud bird, the reason cannot be permanently held by any fetters nor within any bounds; but like the rays of the sun, which will not be caught and held, which elude all chains and go on in endless travel, touching on worlds and systems as they roll, yet not tarrying, seeking evermore distant spaces, whether they be an empty solitude or occupied with worlds, so do the thoughts of man with insatiate curiosity, with tireless wing, move onward, questioning all nature, lighting on manifold finite objects, yet unresting, evermore seeking the Infinite, the Eternal, the Absolute, the Supreme, the Changeless, the Beginning, the End, the Perfect, the God of power, justice, love. Despite yourself, you will, you must, think of God:

and O, your heart, misused, starved, stricken, will feel the need of that Infinite Father, will utter after him a piercing cry, saying, “ Bless me, even me, O my Father!” and yet with the sense of need, goading you on to seek the God of goodness, will be associated a sense of guilt and vileness, shuddering at his voice and fleeing his presence, your whole nature at strife between these two forces, the most inexorable of all necessities urging you to God who alone can satisfy it, the most violent of all terrors driving you for refuge to the farthest distance from his justice and his purity. Despite yourself, you cannot think of life only, for life suggests the contrast of death; nor of time only, for time suggests the contrast of eternity. The fear of a judgment to come will cast a cold shadow over all your joys; and you will go down from your feast and wine cup and dance and house of business to the shores of time, to get an outlook into the dark, tempestuous, roaring ocean of immortality beyond, and shiver as with the horror of an eternal death. Such is the portion of the man who would live without God.

The solemn hour draws nigh, godless hearer, when you will be on the very verge of life not in thought only, but in unquestionable reality. Stretched on your sick bed, an inward fever will

prey on your soul, and your parched lips, your throat dry and burning as Sahara at midday, with a thirst like that of the rich man in hell, will crave a drop of cooling water. But whither will you turn? All your cisterns, however well built and spacious they may now seem, will then have run dry. Mammon may enter your chamber, and hold to your lips a golden cup, but not one drop of comfort will it contain; wealth is naught to the dying man, unless it be a pain that he must now renounce it all, and naked go hence as he came. Honor may pay you a last visit, clad in the robes of office, and speak words of empty praise; but your ears will be dull, and the honors that come from men profit not in the dying hour. Fashion may stand over you in rustling silks and sparkling gems, dressed in the height of style, to utter her cold and ceremonious compliments, and bow you with stately air out of the world; but no solace or hope can fashion offer in such a time. Pleasure will not be there; she demands the sunshine, and flees the gloomy house of disease and death; her tripping steps and flattering voice and painted beauty would be out of place in so serious an hour. Friendship will be true to the latest sand of life, and bending low, with gentle hand and moist eye, will drain out the last sweet drops of sympathy.

and love to cool your arid lips ; but there remains no other office to friendship save to bury with decent rites your body and strew with memorial flowers your grave. Oh, if at that hour you could only drink of the living fountain ; if you could have one sweet assurance of the divine presence and love ; if in your own heart there could spring up a well of water unto eternal life, which is Christ in us the hope of glory ; if before your eyes, darkening to the world, there could gleam and roll the river of life, clear as crystal, which through paradise flows from beneath the throne of God, how peaceful, how happy, would be the close of life !

II. I leave now the utterly godless man, and notice those who do not draw from the well of salvation in the gospel of the Son of God, but rejecting his word and righteousness, the wisdom of Christ and him crucified, the righteousness of faith, invent another religion. They will not seek God as he has declared himself in Christ, and yet they cannot consent to live without a God whom they may revere and trust.

Yet what can they substitute ? They cannot, like the heathen, bow down to wood and stone of their own carving, and make their prayers and gifts at such a shrine. They cannot accept the crescent with the false prophet Mohammed, his

exterminating sword on earth, his sensual paradise hereafter. What shall they believe? It is a sore perplexity; the gospel has so enlightened them without their own choice that they find it impossible to accept the superstitions of lands unchristian; and yet they turn from the true light. They are the deist, the legalist, the ritualist.

The deist affirms the being of God, but denies his word. "God," says he, "has never spoken to man in an intelligible voice, nor has he revealed himself in any written volume. Where, then, shall we learn his nature, his will, his purposes touching us? What is truth? What is duty? What is our destiny? We are referred to our own reason, to our blind conjectures, as the sole oracles to be consulted." His actual opinions are borrowed without credit, perhaps without consciousness, from the Scriptures, though their teachings are mutilated and twisted. But his religion, if it deserve the name, has no credentials, no evidence, no test of truth, no standard of duty, no sanction of rewards and penalties, no sure and sovereign authority, to bind the faith and conscience, to bear up as a strong, deep foundation the trust and hope of the heart. It is a religion without a creed, without a code of laws, without a worship, without a church, without a ministry. It has no body whatever, no

order, no coherence, but is a chaos, or a mist, of crude and changing notions, which may chance to please the individual reason or the individual fancy. Is it not indeed a cistern, a broken cistern, which can hold no water? Is the faith of the deist peace and joy inspiring? Is it a faith of the heart, or not rather a speculation of the head, cold, uncertain, comfortless? O man, will this philosophy suffice in the days of fiery trial? Will it arm the soul with courage and confidence in the midst of peril? Will it comfort at the grave like the words of Jesus, "I am the resurrection, and the life"? Will it open your lips in the sorest adversity, not to complain of your hard fate, but to sing and shout, "Though strength and heart fail, God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever"? "There is a God," you say, O deist; and you say truly. But where is he? Far off, hidden, withdrawn in the depths of space, to you a cold abstraction, an idea. How unlike our Immanuel, God with us! And your homage to the Deity, oh how different from the childlike trust and love with which we look up and cry, "Our Father who art in heaven"! Will your faith prove a fountain of strength and consolation when you lie down to rise up no more? Will it extract the sting of death, overthrow the triumph of the grave, illu-

mine the darkness of sense with the radiance of a blessed immortality? Truly you have forsaken the fountain of living waters, God in Christ, and hewed out a miserable creed, a vain imposture, a broken cistern, with which to comfort your heart.

Next I mention the legalist. He accepts the oracles of God; he calls himself a Christian in his creed. Nevertheless, he does not humbly submit himself to the wisdom of God, which is foolishness to the carnal; he does not seek the righteousness of God by faith, but goes about to establish his own righteousness. A Christian, and yet all that is distinctive in Christianity he sets aside; a believer in the inspiration of the Scriptures, and yet he prefers his own crude notions to their plain teaching. The cross of Christ he makes of none effect, though Paul said, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross.” The work of the Spirit he repudiates and laughs at, though Christ said, “If any man be not born of the Spirit, he shall not see the kingdom of God.” He affirms: “I believe in my Maker, and fear him. I try to fulfill my duty with a clear conscience. I owe no man anything. My lips speak the truth, and my hands render strict justice. I indulge in no vice, in no slander, in no harm. I give to the poor, and befriend the helpless. This is more than many Christians can

say, and on this ground I rest my trust and hope for the approval of God and for heaven in the end.” As though Christ had never died, or was the Saviour of profligates only! As though the question had never been sounded in his ears, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” As though Christ had never said, “No man cometh to the Father but by me.” As though he had never heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. It is strange and alarming that multitudes, both men and women, both old and young, in whose houses is the open Bible they profess to believe, who sit Sunday after Sunday under the preaching of the gospel, who listen to the songs of Zion that tell of salvation in the name of Jesus and by the work of the Spirit; and yet, without confessing Christ, without applying to the fountain of his blood which cleanses from all sin, without professing or seeking a change of heart, they seem easy and content, and expect to go before God the Judge in their own merit, in their own goodness. I tell you, self-deluded friend, that you have forsaken the fountain of all grace, the only merit, which is in Christ; the only sanctifier, who is the Spirit; and you have hewed out a broken cistern that can hold no water. No divine voice witnesses to your adoption. You have no assurance of faith

that in Christ Jesus you are pardoned and saved. You have no sure and steadfast hope of heaven. Such peace as you do possess is false and treacherous; but it is not sweet and full like that of the believer, the peace of God which passeth all understanding. To you Christ is not precious, and the God of hope and peace has not filled your heart with peace and joy, and made you to abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. O turn from these broken cisterns to the ever full and flowing fountain of infinite grace!

Last, I mention the ritualist. He goes not straight to the fountain of life by the way which Christ has opened for us all, in the full assurance of faith; he draws not pardon and grace to help from God; he has no communion with the Father and the Son, no conscious indwelling of the Holy Ghost. But, instead of the fountain, he has hewn out religious forms as his cisterns. His religion is well represented by the tapers which some churches burn in broad day, carefully excluding, so far as they can, the rays of the sun: with a pale, sickly, superfluous light they burn, when through the open windows the warm, bright sunshine is ready to stream in, without money and without price. Once there was a ritual which God himself appointed during the pupillage of his people. It

was august, imposing, significant, but costly, burdensome, powerless to make perfect the worshippers. It consisted of altars of sacrifices, thank offerings, and sweet incense, of a golden candlestick, priestly robes, curious carved work, magnificent curtains, and many ceremonies. This was the hull inclosing and protecting a precious kernel, even Christ the Saviour, the true substance of all types and ceremonies, the gospel beforehand, until it should in due time ripen; but it had no power to expand. At length the hull broke and fell off, because no longer needed; and the ripe kernel, first seeming to die, but only as the condition of productiveness, of a fuller life, vital, spiritual Christianity, took root, and sprang up, and grew in spite of many efforts to kill it, and this day it lives, flourishes, spreads, a great, majestic tree, greater than all trees, shadowing many lands, destined to extend its blessings over all the world. Shall we then seek the old, unprofitable, cast-off hull, the mere covering which has ceased to be of use, and, despising the noble tree of evangelical religion, plant the hull of ritualism, and hope to see it take the place of true and simple faith in Jesus and of the life of God in the soul by the Spirit? Cast off, I beseech you, your voluntary bondage, and rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

Invent not specious ceremonies which may please the eye, the ear, the taste, but cannot reach the soul. Even in the use of the few, simple forms which God has expressly commanded, and suit so well our rational, spiritual religion, do not rest in means, but draw nigh to God himself. True godliness is life, and power, and peace, and joy, and hope, and love. Our life is hid with Christ in God. “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

LORD OF HOSTS AND ~~GOD OF~~ JACOB.

“The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” (Psalm xlvi. 11.)

LORD in capitals is the rendering of Jehovah, the proper, incommunicable name of the true God. “Whose name alone is Jehovah.” (Psalm lxxxiii. 18.) How is it that God was known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but not as Jehovah? (Exodus vi. 3.) We learn from Genesis that the patriarchs did name him Jehovah. The sense must be that the significance of this name was not unveiled, not distinctly set forth to them as to Moses. What, then, is the significance? “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” (Exodus iii. 14.)

“I AM.” The Being; he who has life in himself, and is the one fountain whence all life flows; who has neither origin nor end, but is from everlasting to everlasting, God; the First Cause, himself uncaused; the Maker of all things, himself not made. Self-sufficing, having within himself

all resources of strength and wisdom and majesty and blessedness, his fullness unwasting, undiminished by its outflow to fill up the various capacities of his creatures; independent, all things depending on his will and might. Unchangeable; constant in the glory of his own perfections, uplifted beyond all force, unerring in counsel, the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Compare what Christ says of himself: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (John viii. 58.) "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation i. 8.) Also what is said of him: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." (Hebrews xiii. 8.)

Nothing less than Jehovah can satisfy the reason. We begin, grow, decay; we are helped, hindered, restricted. Everywhere we see the finite, the dependent, the changeful. The great sun has been glowing and sending forth light and heat in copious streams we know not how many ages past, and will continue to do so we know not how many ages to come; but the fuel which makes that fire is being burned up. The everlasting hills wear away; granite is firm, but it is not the rock of

eternal ages. There must be a Mind and a Power before, and above, and beneath, and in, and through all these things, who created them, gave them their properties, fixed them into a system, and still sustains and guides them, who has no beginning and no end of years, whose presence is equally everywhere, who depends not on aught, who is without limitation. All the worlds and all the spirits of the universe are manifestations of his glory, but do not exhaust, do not comprehend, that glory, which existed before they were created, which shines on the same with or without them. The reason rises above all finite objects, and can rest nowhere except in the one Jehovah.

Not the understanding alone, but the conscience also demands the one true and living God. There is a law which no legislature ever enacted; which rests not on the will of any human king; which, though understood with various degrees of clearness and fullness, is the same in all times and lands; which an assembly representing all nations could not annul. All human codes claim to rest on this supreme law; all reasonings about right and obligation appeal to this infallible standard. Repeal every statute, and this law remains. Let a man escape to the heart of a desert, he flees not from the authority of this law. He is responsible

to a higher Power than of earth : the highest man is responsible to the same Power. If no fellow-man know his sin, the guilt is yet on him and the fear; if it be a sin only of the heart, of the intention, which no human eye can read, he yet feels that he is under condemnation, in his nakedness exposed to righteous retribution. The voice of conscience, the law written on the soul, the conviction of duty and accountability, the dread of justice, which we too little regard, but of which nobody can be rid, which is inwoven in our being and makes us moral creatures—this moral nature witnesses to Jehovah, the perfect, the righteous and true and holy, the King of kings and Lord of lords, from whom we came, to whom we go, whose will is holy and just and good, whose authority attends us always, follows us everywhere, before whose judgment seat we must all appear. The conscience can be satisfied with nothing less than Jehovah.

The spirit of worship demands Jehovah. What a blind groping after God human history presents, though he be not far from any of us, though we are his offspring, though in him we live and move and have our being ! We speak with mixed pity and contempt of the African fetich-worshipers—men who bow down before a piece of wood or stone, or a vile animal, and seek to please it, and

get from it protection and good. Yet what did Paul see in Athens, the city of philosophy and art, of highest human culture? Athens was full of idols. The spirit of the apostle was stirred in him. Only man can worship; the religious need and instinct belong to man. He has the wonder, the questioning, the awe, the sense of dependence, the belief in something stronger and wiser and greater than himself, the drawing to find out and revere and serve that divine being, the craving for his favor. Why did not this deepest craving, this highest aspiration, this question of questions, lead to better results? Alas! the carnal mind, the perverse self-will, the love of sin, explain the problem. God spoke in his works of creation and providence, and in the conscience; but men turned away their ear, blinded their mind, went their own way; their foolish heart was darkened, and they fell under the tyranny of base lusts and passions. Nevertheless, the heart demands God. If you bore down deep enough, through sand and clay and perhaps rock, you will come to the artesian waters. The lightning, the hurricane, the earthquake, the pestilence, make us tremble; but these are the servants of One greater than they. The clouds drop down rain, and the sun light and warmth, but there is One whose goodness gives the clouds and the sun.

The fixed and yet soaring mountains, the wide ocean ever heaving and sometimes tempest-swept, the calm heavens aloft boundless and star-studded, humble us with a feeling of our littleness and weakness, but also lift up our thoughts to One higher and mightier and more enduring than they. We admire justice, fidelity, purity, and goodness, as displayed in men, whether the records are authentic history or fictions of poetry and romance; but we search beyond these for One more august and glorious in all the attributes which are worthy of praise, the perfect and infinite and eternal Ideal and Source of whatever is beautiful, grand, and lovely. Hero worship has been celebrated by Carlyle; honor and trust and love are due to true heroes and heroines, kingly and queenly in insight and strength and beneficence; but we cannot rest in hero worship; we must fall down in utter self-renunciation, in full reverence and devotion, in supreme trust and love, at the feet of One holier and better and more majestic than any man, than any angel; the soul can be satisfied only in Jehovah-worship.

The necessities of our nature and condition demand Jehovah. I want security: some ills and dangers I can see and measure, and I may use precautions, or beg help of my fellow-men; but there

are perils of which I cannot take account, and I need a fortress, a shield, a defender, impenetrable to every weapon, irresistible by any force. I want comfort and happiness; the earth is rich in harvests and fuel and flocks and herds; society gives me companions, and friendship and home furnish joy to the heart; the world of letters adds stimulus and food to the appetite for knowledge and to all the intellectual faculties; but these provisions are uncertain, and at their utmost cannot fill the vast and growing capacities of the soul. I want a wisdom unerring to be my guide, and a righteousness which cannot be at fault to correct and perfect me, and infinite mercy to forgive and blot out my offenses. I want death's Master to free me from the fear of that tyrant, and the Lord of life to give me a blessed immortality. My personal needs demand for their satisfaction nothing less than the I AM.

Jehovah is his name. But he is called Jehovah of hosts. You may have been struck with the frequency of this title in the Scriptures—the Lord of hosts. In two places the original word for hosts is not translated, but kept in our version: the Lord of Sabaoth. What are these hosts or troops? The stars are called the heavenly host. These glorious works of God have been substituted for the Cre-

ator in worship. “And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them.” (Deuteronomy iv. 19.) “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power: not one faileth.” (Isaiah xl. 26.) The stars are created, numbered, named. He clothes them with light, determines their grades, fixes their orbits, holds them in their places, speaks the word at which they move with perfect precision, as though they were an army and he the captain.

The holy angels are also called his host or hosts. “And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God’s host.” (Genesis xxxii. 1, 2.) Israel had just crossed the Jordan, and Canaan was to be conquered, when Joshua was awed and cheered by a vision. Near Jericho “there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.” (Joshua v. 13, 14.) “Bless

ye the Lord, all ye his hosts ; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.” (Psalm ciii. 21.) We have taken up that sentiment in our Christian doxology: “Praise him above, ye heavenly host.” “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels,” sings David. (Psalm lxviii. 17.) Daniel and John number them as “thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.” (Daniel vii. 10 ; Revelation v. 11.)

Nehemiah brings together into one view these two hosts—the numberless worlds of light and the numberless company of intelligent spirits: “Stand up and bless the Lord your God forever and ever : and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone ; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, . . . and thou preservest them all ; and the host of heaven worshipeth thee.” (Nehemiah ix. 5, 6.) “And he doeth according to his. will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.” (Daniel iv. 35.)

We behold Jehovah, therefore, not as the sole Presence inhabiting eternity, but at the head or in the midst of the universe he has created with all its forces, and specially of “his angels that excel

in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.” The mention of his hosts serves two purposes. First, it gratifies our social feeling. We need fellows and fellowship. God is to us more, than all besides. The whole creation will not suffice without God. He is our exceeding joy, our portion, and our hope. If God should propose to give us all good men and all good angels as our friends and companions, and the unnumbered worlds as our inheritance, without himself, we could not consent. Sometimes the soul is so filled with the thought of the fullness of God that we cry out, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” (Psalm lxxiii. 25.) This must be construed not absolutely, but by way of eminence. Hence God provides for us the communion of saints. We shall be the peers and companions of angels. Even in the worship of Jehovah we want to join others; we pray in secret, but also in the assembly of his people. Our hearts go forth supremely to the infinite Father of our spirits, but also to our fellow-creatures who are his servants and soldiers and choir of praise.

Moreover, we need to look on his hosts that we may be helped in the realization of the divine maj-

esty and might. God does not need them. His wisdom and strength and omnipresence require no supplementing. To have God is enough for our safety. If God be for us, all principalities and powers can do nothing against us. If the divine bounty be our storehouse, we cannot lack any good thing. But it is hard for us to dwell long on the contemplation of the uncreated, unsearchable Spirit. We lose ourselves in immensity, in eternity. We become dazzled in gazing on the Divine Effulgence. We fall back on signs. We see God in his works. We know him to be far greater than all creation ; yet by creation we climb to the thought of his greatness. God works through means. The efficiency is in God ; he ordains, and empowers, and directs all agencies. But it aids us to see the system of means, the order of his working. So God reveals himself in the center of a grand army, of a countless ministry ; as ruling over all worlds, as guiding and using for his own purposes the course of nature. A citizen visits the treasury of his country ; he has been told of the millions of its coins, but his imagination cannot represent such vast sums ; it helps him to see piles or bags of gold pieces. He hears of a grand army ; but if he see thousands of armed soldiers, column after column, as they march and wheel and drill and fire, he is

more strongly impressed. So it serves a good purpose to us in our feebleness of conception to hear the psalmist say, “Jehovah of hosts is with us.”

The text contains a second title of God. Jehovah of hosts is also the God of Jacob. We see him not apart from his creatures, but encircled by them; and not merely in his relation to the multitude of worlds and angelic spirits, but in his relation to man. The relation is to an individual: the God of Jacob. It may be objected that Jacob stands for a people, the tribes that descended from the patriarch, and after him were named Israel. But what said the Great Teacher in reply to the Sadducees, who denied the doctrine of a resurrection and the existence of the soul after death, holding that death ends all the history of a man? “Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” (Matthew xxii. 31, 32.) It was not enough that their posterity lived; God was the God of these three men, and this truth involved their continued life: they were in communion with the living God, the fountain of life. It is a great thing to be able to say, “Our God: our Father which art in heaven.” “For this God is our God forever and ever.”

(Psalm xlviii. 14.) It is a great thing to say with Thomas before the arisen Jesus, “My Lord and my God.” (John xx. 28.) Paul also called him, “My God.” He drew a draft on his God in favor of the Philippian brethren who had sent a present to relieve his necessities, when he was a prisoner at Rome: “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Philippians iv. 19.)

Jehovah was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, singly; but it follows that he is the God of all and of each who share their faith. It pleased God in the abundance and condescension of his grace to enter into a covenant with Abraham, “to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee” (Genesis xvii. 7); “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis xxii. 18). Paul tells us that this promise was an anticipation, a dim revelation, of the gospel of the Son of God, and that the seed who shall bless all nations is Christ, who in his human nature descended from Abraham. “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen”—that is, the nations—“through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” (Galatians iii. 8, 9.) “Which

in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God," writes Peter. (1 Peter ii. 10.) The covenant by which we have a gracious claim on God as our God, while we acknowledge and bind ourselves to be his obedient people, has been ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.) This covenant is confirmed by the unchangeableness of Jehovah: the immutability of his counsel, the truth of his word who cannot lie, and the solemnity of his oath, he having sworn by himself, because he could swear by no greater, are the ground of our assurance: "That . . . we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Heb. vi. 18.)

The God of Jacob is the God of the Church, is the God of each believer.

This Jehovah of hosts is with us; this God of Jacob is our refuge. Said the dying Wesley: "The best of all is, God is with us." God wrought great things by the hand of Wesley, and the Meth-

odists made great lamentation when he died ; but Wesley was only one of many ministers, of many agents, through whom God blesses his people. “Who is Paul, and who is Apollos? . . . For all things are yours ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ; and ye are Christ’s ; and Christ is God’s.” (1 Cor. iii. 5, 21-23.) God has many hosts, unnumbered servants and soldiers, unlimited stores, for our help and blessing. “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently [immediately, without a moment’s delay] give me more than twelve legions of angels ?” (Matt. xxvi. 53.) Quicker than the word of petition, quicker than our thought, exceeding abundantly too above all that we can ask or think, can and will God do for us. He himself is not afar off, but with us, with us all the while ; and his presence means all defense and all good. Fear not, storm-tossed disciples ; Christ is in the boat. “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” (John xi. 21.) What enemy, what evil, can touch us when our Lord is near ? But he is ever with us, in all his power, in all his wisdom, in all his love. What is death to the believer ? He is the porter to open the gate of the New Jerusalem. What we need is to be filled with

the Holy Spirit, filled with all the fullness of God. Then men shall report that God is in us of a truth. (1 Corinthians xiv. 25.) We dwell in God, and God in us. (1 John iv. 16.) We dwell in God as in a strong city, a fortress, a home. Underneath us are the everlasting arms. He covers us with his feathers, and under his wings we trust. What though the waters roar and be troubled? The deluge drowned the world, but bore up the ark that contained righteous Noah. What though the earth remove, and the pillars of heaven fall? God is our dwelling place in all generations: he cannot be moved. No force can harm us resting in the everlasting, unchanging God. All forces serve his pleasure: he makes them praise him, or puts on them a restraint which they cannot resist. And God is in us, a light to our understanding, a refining fire in our hearts, a strength to our weakness, a fountain of holy joy and courage. “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.” God himself is that river, ever full, ever holy, ever accessible.

IX.

THE STRONG ONE ARMED.

“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.” (Luke xi. 21, 22)

I.

SATAN is represented as “the strong one armed.”

David thus addresses the holy angels: “Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength.”

We know that Satan is more than an angel; he is an archangel, a ruler and head over many angels. “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” There is one Devil, and under him many, innumerable demons. Yea, there are many gradations in rank and power under this prince. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principal-

ties, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." As there are in heaven thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, all under the gladly acknowledged authority of the Son of God, a hierarchy, or sacred government, so is there a pandemonium, with Satan as the head, and various princes whose rank and might are distinguished, and the countless throng of demons, united that their kingdom may stand, united not by love which they know not, but by the fierceness and inveteracy of a common hate of God and of all good. They, too, are under Christ, but not willingly.

It is an awful fact concerning Satan that he tempts every son and daughter of Adam. They are tempted also by other and less potent spirits of evil; but none escape the notice and assaults of their mighty leader. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Jesus tells us that when anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart; again, that the enemy who

sows tares in the field with the wheat is the devil. “Above all,” exhorts Paul, “taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked”—that is, of the wicked one. Only God is omnipresent. But who can put limits to the rapidity with which the devil may pass from man to man throughout the whole earth, leaving not one unvisited, unassailed, aye, often repeating his vile attentions in the course of life? The flight of light and electricity may help us to a conception of the speed with which this bodiless spirit can traverse space, and enter millions of hearts within the narrow bounds of our globe.

It is still more marvelous to consider his acquaintance with the history and heart of each man. He is not omniscient. God alone possesses all knowledge and wisdom. Satan may, does err. He is the false accuser of the brethren, the saints; and his misrepresentation often comes from misunderstanding. He is specially incapable of appreciating true goodness; he is prone to regard it as only a pretense, a mock. Thus he misconceived that upright and godly man, Job, whose equal there was none in the earth; he falsely believed the piety of this patriarch to be self-interested, politic, and that it would be overcome by his temptations. “Only put him in my power, and

let me search and prove him," thought Satan. He, therefore, is not infallible. Yet he possesses wonderful insight into character. He knows a great deal about the human heart. He understands the peculiarities of men's dispositions. How spirit knows spirit, and holds intercourse without bodily organs and senses, must remain to us a profound mystery so long as we are clothed in flesh. But we may be sure of this, that Satan, who enters into us, and so suggests his temptations that we cannot discriminate between them and the spontaneous workings of our own minds, has a clearer and deeper insight into our hearts than is possible to the most intimate of our friends. Besides his craft of nature, he must have learned much by his observation of our race through the course of centuries and by his experience in tempting. Certainly he is very subtle, full of wiles; he has many devices, great power of persuasion; he deceiveth the whole world. With consummate art he shapes his address to suit the peculiar condition, temper, and habits of each man, and hides himself and the mischief which is in his enticements, and even transforms himself into an angel of light, and quotes scripture, and speaks in the name of God.

He is described not only as strong, but as armed.

The stronger than he taketh from him all his armor, his panoply, his complete suit of armor—as Paul exhorts the Christian soldier to take unto himself the panoply, the whole armor of God, that he may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. The several pieces of this divine panoply are specified: the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, the shield of faith, and for shoes the preparation of the gospel of peace. But what is Satan's panoply? I have already quoted what the apostle says about his fiery darts hurled against the soul. He uses all manner of lies. “When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.” He overcame Eve with this weapon; for he contradicted God, who had threatened death as the penalty of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. From that day falsehood has been his favorite means of ruining the souls of men. He perverts, misapplies, and mutilates the word of God. He persuades us that evil is good, and good evil; light is darkness, and darkness light; sweet is bitter, and bitter is sweet. Flattery is a powerful weapon in his hands. Not less does he appeal to our cowardice, and stir up our fears. To exag-

gerate the pleasure of sin; to promise an amount of worldly enjoyment he never gives; to conceal the difficulties in the way of sinful success; to keep out of sight the wickedness and the sorrows of the way of the transgressor, all the shame and remorse and vengeance which overtake him even here, and the ultimate consequence, eternal woe; to magnify and deck out in a false, deceiving splendor his bribes of gold, and rank, and reputation, and power, and festivity—these are a few of the arts and resources in which he trusts. At the same time, he represents the way of virtue and piety as dark, rough, dangerous; he depicts before the imagination in hideous proportions and gloomy colors the sufferings attendant on obedience to conscience—poverty, ridicule, scorn, melancholy, and every other possible earthly ill—until men are frightened into neglect of duty.

One effective weapon of the strong one, therefore, is deception. “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat,” said our unhappy mother. “But I fear,” wrote Paul, “lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” He abode not in the truth; he hates the truth. If he can overthrow our faith, if he can corrupt the pure word of God, if he can

deceive us by his sophistries and lies, he will have us vanquished and captive in his hands.

Another weapon is the pleasures of sin—the many objects which tempt the cupidity, ambition, sensual lusts, hot passions, and self-will of men. Most adroitly does he make use of these.

II.

Having thus considered the Strong One Armed, let us discuss his house which he keeps and his goods which are in peace.

We may regard either man or the world as Satan's palace.

1. Man is a noble dwelling place to be thus desecrated—God-built, designed to be the habitation of the Holy One. “For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.”

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?” A marvel of the divine handiwork is the human body, most curiously and skillfully wrought. The erect form, the noble brow, the eye which is the window of the soul, the countenance expressive of thought, sensibility, and purpose in the varied play of the features and the coming and going of its colors, the articulations of the hands, the exquisite structure of the heart, brain, lungs, and all the vital or-

gans, the tongue with its gift of speech—all these and many other excellences, distinguish the human frame. Books have been written in scientific description and praise of its different organs and members. Poets have sung its beauty and majesty. Art has studied to copy it in marble and on canvas. David prays that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace. Yet Satan has chosen this work of God as his palace, and inhabits it, and uses it for his own vile purposes. The dignity of man and the loveliness of woman are made the abode of the evil spirit. He delights in his stately and beautiful mansion. Alas for human pride and vanity, for the grace of posture and the majesty of mien and the delicacy of coloring transcending art, and the illumining and glorifying of the face by the light of intellect and the sentiments of the soul which overspread the features and kindle the eye, and for all the decorations of the body with cloth and silks and gems, if it be but the devil's home! Have you not read of the lust of the eye? Through it comes enticement to sin; the forbidden but tempting fruit, the sparkling, rosy wine, the golden gleam, the splendor of power, the voluptuous form—all these address the eye; and the eye, itself sinful, covetous, lascivious, proud, casts an evil look on outward

things; it is the devil's window. The ear is an avenue of temptation and a seat of sin; flattering, persuasive, lying, blasphemous, slanderous language is thus employed to draw into all manner of iniquity; sweet, soft tones of the voice, rhymes and measured words, tropes, and strains of music, languishing or inspiring, augment the effect, and the sinful ear listens well pleased to evil communications. The appetites are the servants of Satan, for they crave and seize unhallowed gratification, and debase and pollute the whole man. The tongue speaks deceit, foulness, calumny, cursing. The hands filch, rob, lay hold on bribes, fight, kill, and in many other ways minister to evil. The feet frequent the haunts of vice, and trip to the minstrelsy of the devil, and run on errands of mischief. Sometimes the body shows plainly that it is the devil's habitation: the reeling gait, the stammering speech, the inflamed visage, the grossness and disease of the flesh, perhaps the scowl of anger, the fire of impatience, the jealous or envious look, prove to the spectator the presence and rule of Satan. Sometimes the very dress, posture, and movement of the body are evidently determined by the wicked one. When men care more for the body than for God, give more heed to its adorning, feasting, and comfort than to duty and eternal life, even though

they be not flagrantly immoral, their bodies are Satan's home.

But specially the soul of man is the devil's favorite palace. He occupies the seat of thought, feeling, and volition. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," said God. But now the human heart is the abode of the archfiend.

How vast and grand the capacities of the human intellect! It was formed for high thoughts, to contain treasures of knowledge, to search out Deity in his works, to progress ceaselessly in the adoring study and comprehension of his glory. But Satan "hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine to them." They have become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened. Satan works with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. Upon them has come strong delusion, that they may believe a lie. They can look forth on the universe and see no traces of Godhead. They are led astray by all manner of delusions, of false doctrines. Their boasted wisdom is degraded into serpent's craft. Imagination, the reasoning faculties, and the gifts of speech and song are perverted to the service of sin. The sharpness and strength

of intellect and the stores of learning by which some men are distinguished above the general community, how these are employed to deceive, to overreach, to corrupt, to inflame their fellows ! Does not the devil rule the mind of man ?

Satan occupies the heart which ought to be filled with all the fullness of God. It is really filled with vile affections, with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity. Instead of benevolence, malevolence; instead of sweet charity, selfishness and ill will; instead of sympathies with the poor, the humble, the suffering, coldness and hardness and pride and rudeness; instead of rejoicing in the prosperity of the rich and honored and happy, envy and jealousy; instead of forbearance and forgiveness toward an erring brother, harsh judgment, bitter accusation, refusing to forget old offenses; instead of helping others, striving to pull them down and coveting their goods, and even laying waste what we cannot possess; instead of trying to bring the wrongdoer against ourselves to repentance by kindness, cherishing resentment and wreaking vengeance; aye, often taking the part of the dishonest, the oppressor, the seducer, because they are powerful and rich and high, against the inno-

cent, the downtrodden, the deceived. The spirit of all evil dwells within the soul, prompts its counsels, inspires its feelings, fixes its enmity against God and his law.

The will follows the direction of Satan. He makes men powerless toward the right, puts them in fetters. They are impotent to choose and pursue the good; if they struggle, they are overborne. They may make a few efforts to throw off the dominion of sin, and obey righteousness; but these resolves are capricious, or too feeble to be executed. Yea, Satan persuades them to give themselves up to the practice of evil unresistingly, willingly, it may be gladly and greedily, even with exultation and hilarity. Their own will is set above God's law, above all considerations of right and purity and love; it is freed from the restraints of reason, propriety, shame, humanity; it becomes the devil's will, delighting in mischief, pollution, and profanity.

Even the conscience becomes evil and defiled. It ceases to testify against sin, to warn, to reprove; it is so corrupted and turned aside as to sanction all kinds of iniquity.

Behold the soul of man as perverted into Satan's palace. There is the banqueting hall, where the propensities, irregular and excessive, and feasted

and inflamed, appetite whetted and added sweet-
ness enjoyed by the palate because the pleasures
are forbidden ; there high carnival is held. There
is the grand hall of the imagination, hung with
richest tapestry, its niches filled with exquisite
statuary, its walls adorned with carved work and
most beautiful paintings, but all this wealth and
magnificence of imagery polluted by sin to whose
honor it is devoted ; “the vision and the faculty
divine,” the creative power of the mind, is subsi-
dized by Satan to render his service more attrac-
tive, to invest it with every charm. There is the
chamber of evil concupiscence, glittering with
mirrors, its downy bed spread with snow-white
and luxurious covering, perfumed also with all
fragrance, where “lust, when it hath conceived,
bringeth forth sin ; and sin, when it is finished,
bringeth forth death.” There is the saloon in
which Satan walks among the passions, and speaks
in the ear of each some word to flatter or exas-
perate, and these who dare not go abroad without
a mask, or speak except in a whisper or in a
feigned voice, here show their faces with all bold-
ness, and talk aloud ; pride speaks great swelling
words of vanity, ambition tells his lofty dreams
and aspirations, covetousness unfolds his hopes
and plans of gain, lasciviousness plots to seduce

or violate, envy serpentlike hisses forth sharp slanders, revenge threatens with fiery eye and hand grasping the hilt of his sword: all these encourage one the other; sometimes the room is filled with the confusion of many voices, sometimes one excited passion, heard distinctly above the rest, demands attention, and engages the sympathy and aid of all the soul. There is the council chamber, the hall of stormy debate and deep deliberation, in which the desires and passions through imagination, judgment, and logical acumen plead their several causes, and the will, calling itself imperial, issues his decrees; while conscience is either silenced, or, being perverted, no longer the voice of God, sanctions with sophistry what the heart craves: all are animated and directed by the ruling influence of the Evil Spirit, and the whole process results in the registering of his designs. The body is but the outer hall, the servants' apartments, where tongue and hands and feet, and all the members and all the organs, await their orders from within, and hasten forth to put them into execution.

2. Let us look from man the individual to the whole world, both the race and the globe on which they live. It is the devil's palace.

The architect saw it and pronounced it very

good. David praises the Creator for having made man lord over all things below. Alas! Satan has intruded into this once fair scene, wrested from our race the world, and raised himself to the throne of power. Jesus calls him the prince of this world; Paul calls him the god of this world, and the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. "The whole world lieth in wickedness," says John; "in the evil one," reads the Revised Version.

Cast your eye over the nations, read the histories of earth, and see that it is the devil's kingdom.

To the angel of the church in Pergamos Jesus sent this message: "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." The city of Pergamos in Asia Minor was in that day called by the Lord Jesus preëminently (what a bad eminence!) the seat or throne, the dwelling place, of Satan; though even there were a few faithful disciples, a little church of the living God. Where, now, shall we fix his special seat? In some populous city of heathendom, capital of a great power, accumula-

tion of all that is vile and hideous and cruel and false in the systems of idolatry? At Paris, the gay, beautiful, enlightened city, licentious, sending forth infidel doctrines as well as worldly fashions? In our New York, the metropolis, or in Washington, the capital of the great republic? In Rome, the see of the pope, who claims to be God's vicegerent on the earth and head of the Church? Alas! the evidences of Satan's presence and rule are so patent, so numerous everywhere, that it is difficult to determine where is his chief seat. To him are offered yearly human sacrifices by hundreds of thousands, the victims of war, revenge, lust, cupidity. He has everywhere his temples in which lies are preached instead of God's truth. He has everywhere his hells, gambling houses fitly so called, in which men stake for a little gold not only the subsistence of themselves and their families, but their reputation, honor, and immortal hopes; drinking houses in which is sold the beverage that sparkles to the eye, and pleases the palate, but, whether drank silently and secretly or amid the convivial laughter and jests and toasts of a company, is the fire of the pit to consume body and soul; houses of the strange woman with flattering, honeyed lips and impudent face, whose feet go down to death, whose steps take hold on hell

“with her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him; he goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life: her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.” These are only a few of the haunts of the wicked one, of his devices, a part of the armor in which he trusts to maintain his victory over the world. The veil which cunning or decency throws over much of his work, I will not attempt to lift.

In conclusion, consider Satan’s peace. Clad in armor, exultant in his strength, he keeps his palace, and his goods are in peace. Whatever belongs to man, whatever forms the furniture of earth, this goodly heritage, Satan has usurped. Hence his proud language to the Son of man. From the summit of an exceeding high mountain he showed him in an instant of time his broad empire, earth’s kingdoms, all their wealth and power and glory; and as the world’s master he said: “All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” The haughtiest and mightiest princes of the world held their titles under him; and while they thought themselves

independent and sovereign, only served the devil, and were his satraps, his underlings. Nobles, philosophers, priests, statesmen, and warriors were his chief servants; the mass also were his slaves and worshipers. There was none to dispute his reign. Among the idolatrous nations before Christ came, through vast regions of the globe which are not even in part evangelized down to our day, there can scarcely be said to exist a contest of good with evil, of light with darkness, dissatisfaction with the rule of sin and revolt against it, aspiration and struggle after a better day. If the struggle be made, it is so feeble, so easily put down, that Satan fears not the loss of his scepter. This is the world's peace of consent and submission to the Evil One, a dull, dark, disgraceful, and disastrous peace.

Look into your heart, O man, and tell me whether your past or present experience interprets this Satanic peace. "They are not in trouble," says the psalmist, "as other men; neither are they plagued as other men." Fearful is the ease of some men in sin, their quiet surrender to the devil. He has no difficulty in enforcing their obedience; they are taken captive at his will. Without shame, or compunction, or desire of release, either in abject inertness or even with greediness and joy,

they do his bidding, and serve him with all their powers. There are no inward restlessness, no rising up of conscience and reason and will against Satan, no cries from the depths of the heart after deliverance. Satan reigns undisputed lord in the security and peace of human bondage, degradation, and despair.

X.

THE STRONGER THAN SATAN.

“But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.” (Luke xi. 22.)

SATAN is strong; but Jesus is stronger than he. Between Christ and Satan there is the broad difference between the Creator and his creature. A very prevalent faith among the nations described the Evil Spirit as coeternal and coequal with the Good Spirit: they forever struggle in essential hostility, neither able to subdue the other, and divide the empire of the universe as do night and day. Not such is the doctrine of the Bible. God has no rival. He alone is without beginning of days, self-existent, independent, all-powerful. He is the Supreme King; at an infinite distance below his throne are the archangel and the archfiend. Satan was made by him—not indeed with his present character, for this is his own perversion of the nature God gave him; he has fallen from his first estate: but from God he received life and all his faculties. And Christ is God: as Paul writes, “Of whom”—that is, Israel—“as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all,

God blessed forever. Amen.” “All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers.”

Christ has life in himself; but Satan has a derived and dependent existence. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” “In him is life”—life essential, life unoriginated, life eternal; his name is Jehovah, I AM. He also is the fountain whence flow forth all the streams of life which are found in the wide range of creation, borrowed life in its manifold, countless diversities; and by that fountain they are supported; because it is inexhaustible, they fail not. Therefore Christ is represented as “upholding all things by the word of his power.” Atlas on his broad shoulders bore up the weight of the solid earth; but not the earth alone, the starry heavens also, and the heaven of heavens, too sublime to be searched out by man, too distant to be visible, or, if not by reason of remoteness, then by its too spiritual and refined glory invisible to our gross sense; hell also, too profound and dark to be seen by us, and all the orders of beings

which people these worlds—all are upheld, not on any shoulders, not on any mighty arm, not by a ponderous chain fixed to the eternal throne, but by the word of Christ's power. If that word were unspoken, they would perish. But Satan has no life in and of himself; he exists by the sufferance of Christ, rather by his decree for purposes of justice and everlasting wrath.

Christ is exalted above all change; Satan is subject to such conditions as He appoints. “The same yesterday, and to-day, and forever,” is our Lord. “Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” Satan has already undergone a most fearful change. By the abuse of his free will he corrupted his own nature, darkened his own glory, fell from his first estate.

Christ is universal Sovereign; Satan is one of his subjects. “All things were created by him”—that is, Jesus—“and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” He is “heir of all things.” Not only in the essential right of Godhead, of Creator and Upholder, but in his mediatorial office as God-man, he is head over all angels, all worlds, all nations, all things. The universe is put in subjection to his sole authority. Beelzebub is one of his servants. He does not indeed yield him a cheerful submission,

but he cannot resist Christ's power and rule. He is tormented by the just wrath of the Lord Jesus, and he is restrained in place, time, working, at the pleasure of Christ.

Christ is omniscient; Satan's subtlety and knowledge, though great, are limited. We cannot indeed call him wise though he be so crafty, since he dared to defy the Almighty, and suffers the eternal penalty of his own folly. He is ignorant of many things, and liable to error. But Christ sees the end from the beginning. The past and the future, "from everlasting to everlasting," are as distinct to his intelligence as the present. "He knoweth what is in man;" he needeth not any to tell him. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" Infinite wisdom is to us incomprehensible. We try to think of it, and we are confounded. In this impotence of thought, we attempt to ascend step by step; if perchance we may approach the glory of the knowledge of Christ. Therefore we survey all mankind; we think of the eye and whatever can be known through the eye; he made it, made the light, fixed the limits of vision; but how much does he see? We think of the ear, and all the knowledge which comes to man through

this organ, all the varieties of sounds, high and low, which it can apprehend; it is his work, and he made the air whose waves impress the nerves of hearing, and ordained how far they shall be able to affect us; but how much does he hear? We think of the human mind, of all its faculties, of its insatiate curiosity, of the several grades and sorts of intellect, of the aggregate of all that is known, and of the capacity of the race to acquire greater knowledge; he created the mind, and endowed it with its several powers, and fixed their limitations; but how much does he know? We then rise to the higher order of spiritual beings; and think of their larger and keener faculties of observation and philosophy, and how ignorant and foolish the wisest and most learned men are in comparison; he kindled these intelligences differing in measure and intensity as differ the stars of heaven, and assigned each his own orbit greater or less; but who shall understand his uncreated and unbounded wisdom? Surely he knows us altogether—he who made us what we are and what we may be.

Christ is omnipresent; Satan has his place. The sunlight is rapid, but it is subject to limitations of space; it is now here, now there; its flight implies that it is not everywhere. So is it with the prince

of darkness. He is not always with any one of us. As it is written of Jesus, so it is true of every disciple: "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season." Let us rejoice that there are seasons of relief from his hateful and dangerous presence and temptation! But, "lo! I am with you alway," says Jesus, "even unto the end of the world." We enjoy the perpetual presence of Christ—all of us who are his. He is with others too, but they do not enjoy his presence. There is not an hour, not an instant, during which Jesus is away. If there might come even a moment when we were without his help and comfort, what ruin might ensue! It would be the fatal moment. But whether we wake or sleep, whether our minds are fixed or rove, Jesus is at hand, by our side, in our hearts.

Christ is omnipotent; Satan has a delegated and measured power. He worketh with great power and signs, and lying wonders, but only under the divine permission, and within prescribed bounds. Hell can no more overpass its fixed limits than can the wild and raging deep. Why any strength is allowed to the Wicked One, why he is not chained down to his dungeon, we cannot understand, just as we cannot understand why Providence permits the wrecking tempest on the sea. But it is a most

consoling thought that the devil cannot do whatever he will. He has not created, and he cannot annihilate. He cannot arrest the course of nature, for Christ directs it; he cannot overturn the system of worlds, for by Christ all things consist; he cannot dethrone the Son of God from his holy hill of Zion. Even we in Christ's name can resist the devil, and he will flee from us.

But Jesus Christ possesses all power. As he is God, it is inherent, not derived; not for a time, but forever; not subject to any limits, but immeasurable; nor to any rules save those of his own wisdom and righteous will. As Mediator, Head over the Church, King of saints, all power and judgment are committed into his hands until the consummation, when God shall be all in all. He is not restrained by the laws of nature, for they are his own ordination, and he can continue, suspend, or annul them at pleasure; nor by the thrones of earth, for to him the nations are given for a possession, and he sets up or puts down after the counsel of his own will; nor by the thrones of hell, for all the demons, with Satan as their chief, are under his feet, and the disciples cried out in wonder and joy, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name!" As in the beginning by a word he laid the deep foundations

of the earth, and stretched forth the curtained heavens, so in the end by a word he shall remove the granite bases of the world, and fold up the overhanging canopy to be laid aside as a vesture no longer needed.

Such is Christ, the Stronger than the Strong One. Let us now contemplate his strength as put forth in victory over Satan. For the possession of man the battle is joined. With what an august yet awful importance it invests our race! Earth is the scene of a conflict such as perhaps is not carried on in any other of the innumerable worlds, visible or invisible, which compose the universe of God; and to our little planet may therefore belong a moral grandeur, a momentous interest, beyond them all. And around the home, within the heart of every man, rages a battle which exceeds in the magnitude of its issues and in the forces ranged on either side the most disastrous and the most glorious wars which have ever employed the song of the poet and the pen of the historian. Satan is found in possession of humanity as his palace; all that is of the world he claims and holds and uses as his own; he lords it at will with the arrogance of a secure and peaceful reign. Not until there had been the amplest historical evidence that in all the world there was no power sufficient to rise up

against the prince of darkness and overcome him, did the Avenger and Redeemer appear. “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” During the week of his extreme humiliation and passion, in which he offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and obtained for us eternal redemption, he said: “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

Let us contemplate this conflict as it takes place in the individual breast. Man is not passive, not merely a palace for whose possession opposing forces come together; he is a free agent, and must accept or reject the Deliverer. The first effect of Christ’s coming is to interrupt the sinner’s peace. Stormy war is brought into the very soul. Where there had been quiet, now is agitation. The darkened understanding receives a ray of light, and begins to exercise itself about the things of God. The conscience, which had been stupefied and well-nigh dead, is quickened, arouses itself, and proclaims within the heart all the holy law and its dread anathemas against sin and Sa-

tan's rule. A dim, almost extinct sense of filial relation to God, and a longing to be restored to his favor and likeness, rise up with the prodigal's cry, "I will arise and go to my Father!" Satan, meanwhile, is not indifferent. He does not yield his palace without a hard struggle. He puts on his trusted panoply. He is full of defiance, for his armor has proved irresistible on a thousand fields through all the centuries. He has ready many falsehoods, many devices. Changeful in shape, very illusive, are his lies. If bold infidelity will not answer, he insinuates doubts; he has an oily eloquence, soft flattery. He calls to his aid all the lusts and passions which have so long done him faithful service, and helped him to keep the soul in subjection. But a stronger than he takes from him all his arms. Behold the Prince of Evil disarmed! First, the word of God breaks in twain, and strikes from his hand, the weapon of deception. "The truth shall make you free." Christ's truth prevails over the devil's lie. The simplicity that is in Christ is more than a match for the subtlety of the serpent. As with Jesus in the wilderness, so now the simple words, "It is written," overcome all the devil's craft and power. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Satan's sophisms are detected

and exploded by the wisdom of God ; though he come like an angel of light, the truth compels him to return to his own proper shape as the Prince of Darkness. Let a man have the love of the truth, and with prayer search the Scriptures, and his mind shall be so illumined that the false, specious doctrines of the Evil One shall not deceive him.

The fear of death is another of Satan's arms of which he is now stripped. "The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law." If it had not been for man's own guilt, he would never have fallen into the power of the enemy. Covered by the broad ægis of the divine law, that ægis whose blazing glory cannot be tarnished or dimmed, and whose strength and firmness are impenetrable to every weapon, he might have laughed to scorn all the malice of hell. But he has abandoned that protection, and invited against himself the sharp, glittering spear of Justice. The sin of man is the very power of Satan against him. Its wages is death ; and the guilty heart trembles with invincible terror at the thought of judgment to come. To flee from the avenging God is the instinct of the sinful soul. Hence it was necessary that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, should first satisfy in his own person the inexorable demands of the violated

law, of eternal and now insulted righteousness, if he would ransom man. So “he took part of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” The conflict of the garden and the cross preceded the conflict in the soul of the believer. “This was your hour,” O Antichrist, “and the power of darkness.” Then did the powers of evil that had exulted over our vanquished race, and shed in copious streams the blood of the righteous, from Abel to the Baptist, shout over their great triumph, when the serpent bruised the heel of the woman’s promised seed, and a more precious blood stained Gethsemane’s soil and the cross of Calvary. Then shuddered the world in the blackness of total eclipse, when its Light and Hope expired on the tree. But soon that hour fled, and the scepter of darkness was broken; and life and immortality rose upon the world. As Samson, awaking when the cry rang forth, “The Philistines be upon thee!” snapped the green withs with which he was bound as though they had felt the touch of fire, and shook them from him, so did the Son of man loose the pains of death, and travel forth in the greatness of his might, the cross and the empty sepulcher

thenceforth the signs by which he shall conquer. And the soul that believes in Jesus, justified by faith, begotten again unto a living hope, challenging with all boldness every accuser, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” is delivered from the bondage of fear, and Satan no more can terrify him by brandishing the dart of death.

The despair which comes from the consciousness of moral impotence, of slavery under sin, is a third weapon taken from the Evil One. Men yield to sin because they think resistance vain. Who can change his evil habits? How much less can we change our evil nature! We may contend against human despotism; but the chains of our slavery were not cast in any forge of earth, imposed by any decree of human court, nor bound upon the physical limbs; they are wrought by the devil in the fires of the pit, and riveted upon the hidden man of the heart, and defy his utmost strength to burst them. The reforms of men are outward; the seat of the devil is that inward corruption which human institutions cannot reach. As Hawthorne has well described, if all the works of evil in the broad world could be gathered into one vast heap, and to them were applied the kindling torch, and they should perish in one heaven-towering

and far-spreading fire, still the heart would remain, and out of this fountain would soon come forth again all the wickedness and all the woes that curse the race. But Jesus Christ comes to the rescue with an inward, heart-searching, all-subduing power. By his quickening Spirit he enters, pervades, occupies all the chambers of the soul. He overcomes by his supreme might the devil enthroned and ruling in the secret mind and heart. The great iron gate swings open, and the fetters of brass fall off from the captive. The wretch who cried in his agony, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" now responds to his own despairing question, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" He springs to his feet, full of hope and clothed with divine energy; he says boldly, "Through Christ strengthening me I can do all things."

Behold now the palace out of which the Usurper has been cast, cleansed, renovated, refurnished for the indwelling of the Lord Jesus. Even the body is sanctified by that holy presence. Innocence guards the portals of the ear; out of the eye purity and kindness look forth; sincerity speaks through the lips; justice and beneficence employ the busy hands and swift feet; temperance

and chastity govern the whole body. Christ fills the mind with light. Love of truth gathers the wisdom which is more precious than gold and rubies; memory is the treasury in which these stores are contained; judgment tries and proves all things by the tests and exact balances of righteousness; imagination, neither lawless nor proud, sheds over nature a grace and splendor which transcend the cognizance of the senses, and, dimly imaging the creative power which in its perfection is the sole prerogative of the I AM, constructs, as out of nothing, its own world; yet in lowness and homage it delights to behold the uncreated and unbounded glory of the Godhead alike in the material universe shaped by the divine hand, and in those spiritual faculties which are conscious of the Creator's presence and of choice coöperate with his will; conscience, prime minister of the great King, proclaims his commands with an authority which is undisputed; and faith, keen of eye and farseeing, apprehends truths too deep or vast or high for human reason. Jesus Christ is enthroned within the heart, the Spirit of holiness and love. All the desires and affections receive from him their law, and gladly yield him their service. Acquisitiveness brings to his feet her treasures, and says: "All these are thine, O thou who for our

sakes didst become poor." Ambition takes from her brow every wreath and crown of honor, and casts them before his throne, saying: "All glory be to thee, who didst stoop to shame for our salvation." Sportive mirth becomes reverent, and radiant joy sings her sweetest, richest song in praise of the Lamb that was slain. Resignation takes the cup which he extends, and asks not, as she drinks, what are its contents, finding ever sweetness in the knowledge that it is of his mingling. Obedience stands girt and active, ready for any work he may order. Hope leans securely upon his word of promise, folding her wings until he shall bid her spread them for a distant flight. Love, greatest of the virtues, draws near, and leans on his bosom; not presumptuous, but self-forgetting, self-effacing, she sees only the beauty and the glory of her Lord, wonders, worships, praises, and is filled with delight in his perfections, now so clearly discerned, and yet ever passing knowledge.'

Study this conflict as an historical fact, the characteristic feature of the Christian era, a war which now progresses, and whose final results are told in prophecy. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Angels sang at his birth, "Peace on

earth!" Yet Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." He came to break the Satanic peace of a stupefied conscience, moral paralysis, acquiescence in the reign of superstition, injustice, lust, and cruelty; but he came also to introduce the heavenly peace of harmony with God, and of the kingdom of truth, righteousness, purity, and love. He did not put into the hand of his Church an exterminating sword, but worldwide charity, which overcomes evil with good. Yet there resulted division and strife. There is a separation between the wheat and the chaff, the children of the day and the children of the night, the disciples of Jesus and his rejecters and foes. Men rally around two opposing banners, the cross of Christ and the black flag of hell. Jesus has a militant Church, soldiers who acknowledge supreme allegiance to him, and fight against all evil. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." Hell is vehemently assailed. Many idolatries and superstitions, many practices and works of the devil, which were as fortified citadels, their foundations broad and deep, their walls massive, lofty, strong, with bastions and towers, and hosts of defenders full of zeal and well armed to hold

every part, their colors flying proudly above the ramparts, have fallen before the gospel to rise no more. The peace of the nations, as they believed Satan's lies and served his pleasure, has been broken; light has invaded the realm of darkness; virtue and piety have assaulted long-established, dominant, widespread vice and irreligion; a long line of captives have been disenthralled, have gladly entered the service of Immanuel, have been received into the New Jerusalem. Still the conflict deepens, extending over a wider area, taken up with fresh ardor by successive generations, destined to continue until the end of time. Yet doubt not the victory of Christ. He goes forth conquering and to conquer. Satan shall fall before him, and Satan's works shall be destroyed. The crowns of every kingdom of the broad world shall adorn the brow of the Prince of Peace, and every tongue confess him King of kings and Lord of lords.

One other feature of this victory remains to be noted. "He divideth his spoils." Satan usurped all the good things of this world, and perverted them from their original design to sin and mischief. He used for his own base purposes all riches, dignities, powers, pleasures, art, and learning, whatsoever should serve man. But Christ wrests these

from his grasp, and restores them to their proper use. Not that his disciples, armed with carnal weapons, fired with covetousness and ambition, seize these things; this would be to serve Satan in the name of Jesus. But as human thought and experience become leavened with the doctrine and Spirit of Christ, the treasures of earth are consecrated to the cause of righteousness; the magistrate wields his sword for the protection of innocence, and all the departments of state—executive, legislative, and judicial—are directed by heavenly wisdom for the ends of truth and holiness and for the good of man; the schools of earth teach a pure learning, genius and art work in the cause of Christ, music and poetry and all that is pleasing become hallowed, and on everything, great and small, is written one inscription: *Holiness unto the Lord.*

Travel on in the greatness of thy strength, conquering Saviour! Fulfill to us thy promise: “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly!” Consume the wicked with the breath of thy mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of thy coming! Deliver us, good Lord, from the Evil One! Put down his rule and power here in our midst, here in our hearts! And thy will be done on earth as in heaven, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

XI

FAITH AND WORKS.

“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.” (James ii. 18)

WHAT is the great need of the Church in our day, faith or works? In the ministry, do the times require men of a deeper and stronger faith, or men of purer lives and more abundant labors? Should the laity be stirred up to a simpler and livelier trust in Christ, or to be doers and toilers? I answer: We need a working faith. We need more faith that we may have more works. We need to be believers in order that we may be doers. There is no antagonism between faith and works, nor even independence; a true faith proves and perfects itself by a true activity.

A true faith, I say; for there are many false kinds. Mere head faith, orthodoxy, accepting the creed, is a tree with roots, trunk, and boughs, but withered, dry, dead. Such faith, complete in its parts, perfect in form, but sapless, lifeless, many possess who have been taught from childhood the articles of religion, hearers only and not doers of the truth. Faith and the confession of faith, stop-

ping not at inward assent, but proceeding to open avowal and defense, which nevertheless passes not beyond language and ceremonies, is a tree clothing itself in beautiful foliage: it is not bare and rigid like a dead tree; a brave show to the eye are its green leaves fluttering in the breeze; but all its vital force is exhausted in putting forth this gay dress. Such is the man who says, "I have faith," who cries, "Lord, Lord," but does not the will of the Father. Christ has condemned this character in the brief comment, "Nothing but leaves." Faith which does not spend itself in talk, but stirs the heart, is a tree in blossom: it presents the cheerful promise, the incipient buds, of future fruit. This is the person who, hearing the word and believing, weeps, desires to be a partaker of saving grace, prays, perhaps rejoices. I have watched in the spring and early summer trees that bloomed and were covered with young fruit, exciting hope of a large, luscious crop; but they dropped singly on calm days, and showered down on windy days, and not one came to a sound and juicy ripeness. So have I watched souls whose early promise deceived my happy hopes. Faith which assents, confesses, longs, vows, and works, practical and energetic, is a tree living, leafed, full of sap, bending beneath a weight of golden, delicious, wholesome

fruit, blessed of all observers. This is “they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”

“ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” I see the entire frame of a man, head, body, organs, limbs, no part lacking, all rightly adjusted; but the heart beats not, there is no breath in lips and nostrils, the color does not come and go, the eyes are fixed, the members motionless. This is the orthodox believer, the man who received a Christian education, who could stand an approved examination before a committee of Methodist theologians; but his faith has no breath, no fire, no power, cold, stiff, and silent as chiseled stone. I see a second shape that gives one sign of life, and only one—he can speak; he talks correctly, fluently, eloquently; men listen, pleased and admiring; but the tongue is the sole member he can use, and, apart from the stream of sound he gives forth, he might as well be a corpse. This is the talking believer. He interests, captivates us, at first; we think him the greatest saint, deeply and variously experienced in the things of God, full of faith, zeal, and joy; his ready, bold, and fervid utterance humbles us before him, and makes us wonder whether we have any grace, so

dim and cold seems our spark in the presence of his bright blaze. But we begin to find out that it is all talk, all profession ; that glib of tongue, he is hollow-hearted, and in conduct useless ; that the religion of which he speaks so beautifully and enthusiastically exerts no control over his life ; and we conclude that he is either self-deluded or an arrant hypocrite. I see another form with the nerves of sensibility acutely responsive to their appropriate stimulants ; he feels quickly, keenly ; his eyes overflow, his body thrills with sensitiveness ; but the nerves of motion are dead, the muscles have no contractile power ; he lies there incapable of action, corpse-like, save the currents of sensation which run through his nervous system. This is the sentimental believer. His feelings respond to the word ; his face is bathed with tears, or radiant with delight ; he sighs, groans, smiles, shouts, in accord with the doctrine and exhortation. But his penitence goes no farther than drops of grief ; his faith is merely emotional ; he shudders at the terror of the Lord, and melts at the glory of the cross, and is exalted at the description of heaven's glory, and exults at the prophecy of the gospel's triumph ; but there is no turning from sin and bringing forth fruit of righteousness, no practical demonstration of the love of Jesus and con-

secration to his cause, nothing of earnest purpose and energetic effort. I see a fourth figure which proves to be a complete, true man ; there is the form, but also the life and power ; he is not dumb, nor afraid to speak, but he uses the tongue as only one among the varied gifts of humanity ; the nerves of sensation are in healthy condition, but so are the nerves of motion and all the muscles, the central mind and will flashing its commands along the nervous tracts, and promptly obeyed ; a breathing, feeling, moving, mighty organism. This is the working believer. He knows the truth, and is not ashamed to acknowledge it, saying, “ I believe, and therefore do I speak ; ” his creed is not an icy speculation, but it warms and thrills the whole soul ; his will is guided by the wisdom of God unto salvation ; the doctrines, precepts, warnings, and promises of the Scriptures are received, digested, assimilated, incorporated into his soul, experience, life, strength ; he loves and does the truth with all his soul and mind and heart always.

If faith without works is dead, one may ask, what are works without faith ? They are no tree at all, but a mere imitation, however ingeniously done ; of paper, muslin, wax, plaster, wood, brass, stone, or other material ; there is only the deceit-

ful semblance of trunk, branches, leaves, and fruit. They are no man at all, but only an automaton, a machine with lever and axle and pulley, mechanical, external forces substituting and feigning to be a living, throbbing, self-active organism with a true heart and flow of life-currents.

There can be no right faith without works as its outcome, and no right works without faith as their fountain. A country is involved in a tremendous strife. A man says to his fellow-citizens: "We contend with a strong and determined foe. To achieve success, every man should do his whole duty. Economy of our resources, ungrudging liberality to the cause, vigilance, courage, fortitude, and union are the necessary conditions of ultimate triumph." One of the crowd replies: "I do not like to hear such talk. It is depressing. I feel a perfect assurance of glorious victory. My faith is strong in the justice of our cause, the prowess of our troops, the skill of our generals, the wisdom of our statesmen, and the invincibility of our people. Defeat? let not the word be uttered, nor the thought conceived. Have faith." "Well," says the first, "I will buy bonds of the government, give largely to the soldiers, and go at once to the front—I and my sons. You may judge my faith by my works." But the critic is content to brag

of his faith without works. A business is projected in the community which demands a large capital. A moneyed citizen addresses a meeting in its behalf. In glowing language he tells of its importance to the city. He parades his proofs, and asserts his full persuasion that it will pay extraordinary dividends to the stockholders. But he does not invest a dollar. One of the assembly, not so fluent, calls out: "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Put me down for a hundred shares."

But somebody objects: "James is the advocate of works, Paul of faith. Paul says: 'Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' So this great champion of the gospel taught a faith that does not work." Do you really believe that Paul meant a lazy, self-pleasing, do-nothing faith? If he did, he was surely the most inconsistent of men, for never was there a harder worker; as he wrote of himself, "In labors more abundant." He remembered without ceasing and with great joy the "work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope," which the Thessalonian converts exhibited. He wrote of "the obedience of faith." He said:

“ Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” He exhorted the saints to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. So that Paul, like James, preached not a dead, not a barren faith, but faith that loves, obeys, labors, and serves.

What, then, does Paul mean by these words, “To him that worketh not, but believeth?” You have a shapeless piece of hard, tough wood, which you desire to be converted into a certain mechanical instrument. A turner has steam-driven machinery, with wheels and bands and cutting tools of hardest temper and keenest edge. He will adjust the block, it will spin and sing, and in a trice, if you let him, the work will be done, rounded and smoothed and grooved and pierced to suit your purpose. But you are not willing that he shall do the whole work; you must first prepare the wood for him: so you take your knife, and hack, and hack, dulling and breaking the blade, but scarcely scratching the hard block. Faith works not, but brings our guilty record and wicked heart to God, that by the sole merit of Christ and energy of the Spirit we may be instantaneously justified and renewed, to the praise of almighty grace. The work of faith is to yield up the refractory wood to the

turner; but after the tool has been shaped, surely you will not keep it idle.

“Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord,” was the word of command to Israel which was also a word of promise. A crisis had come. Before them rolled the sea, behind them pressed the army of Pharaoh. Unbelief would have madly assailed the hosts of Egypt, or vainly scattered to the mountains, or sought the angry king with supplications and bent the neck to bondage. The faith that worked not to resist or escape stood still, and glorified God, to whom nothing is hard. But faith was not less faith, and did not less give God all the glory, when at the word, “Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward,” they moved boldly to the waters.

The younger son, having wasted all his portion, and being well-nigh starved, returns to his father, who orders the best robe to be put on him and the fatted calf to be killed. Suppose he had answered: “No, father; I cannot accept a son’s place yet; I cannot trust the gratuitous pardon and large generosity you offer. I will go on a farm, and work for hire, until I pay back what I have squandered, and purchase a son’s position.” That would have been foolish, ungrateful, unbelieving work, the manifestation of a legal, self-righteous spirit.

Faith took the free mercy, the unbought and undeserved bounty, of the father, without delay, without hesitation, without a doubt of the fullness of his love, without one proud thought of bargaining for the honor and the portion of a son. But think you that he did not thenceforth serve that father? that he would have counted any labor too hard, any privation too severe, by which he might testify his love and advance his father's interests?

I shall proceed to show how faith is the principle of genuine working.

1. Faith applies the incentives to work.

Men will not labor without motive. There is, indeed, a spontaneous activity, a pleasure in the use of their powers, a restlessness and pain in idleness. Hence we sometimes see them in violent exercise for no end beyond the exercise itself. But this is play, and not work. Again, they labor strenuously and steadily for insufficient ends. Here is a man without family or kin dependent on him, the interest of whose capital is ample for his chosen style of living, and yet he plans and toils with patient care through years to amass a fortune for which he has no use. He knows, if he allow himself to reflect, that the prize is worthless; but he prefers to vacancy the excitement of work and of mere success. A young lady spoke to me of

the utter frivolity of her own life, of all its pleasures and aims; but the engrossment with trifles and the ceaseless, unmeaning whirl were better than sitting still and moping. The believer steps into a new sphere, and enters a life of the noblest ends and the mightiest motives.

Faith works by fear. When the house is on fire, when the ship springs a leak, how men labor! The loss of the soul, the wrath to come, the death undying—these are calamities to flee from which may well arouse all our energies.

Faith works by hope. Covetousness cannot seek riches to compare with the inheritance of the sons of God. Ambition cannot aspire after honors so high as the crown of righteousness that fadeth not away. The devotee of pleasure cannot promise himself such pure and intense joys as those of grace and life eternal. The certainty and grandeur of a celestial recompense stimulate and support the most earnest toil.

Faith works by love. Faith that gazes in open vision upon the glory of God in the face of Christ, faith that listens with quickened ear to the invitations and promises of the gospel, faith that cries, “Abba, Father,” and receives the fullness of the blessing, and anticipates the everlasting portion—faith kindles love in the heart; and what a worker

is love! Thought of personal reward is not here needed; to toil, to suffer, to die for Christ, is motive enough. Nor is there wanting to the believer the impulse of a true humanity, love for the Church of God, love for a perishing yet ransomed world.

Lord, increase our faith! We need to be stirred up, to be set aflame, to be constrained to effort, by a stronger faith. We are idle, indifferent, fruitless, because we do not believe. It is sometimes said, and truly said, that if men have only a partial, doubtful persuasion of the truth of Christianity, so weighty are the interests involved, so tremendous are the motives it applies, that the dictate of reason is to heed its voice as though they knew it to be true. But we need a deep, clear, rooted, undoubting faith—its full assurance. We need the faith which gives to spiritual things a substantial, massive, weighty grandeur in comparison with which all sensible things become shadowy and insignificant. We need the faith that does not blindly feel after an unknown truth and good, nor touch and lose them, but sees them with unfilmed eye, and holds them in firm grasp, with all the certainty of consciousness. We need the faith to which heavenly and eternal realities are not dim, vague, far off, so that they are eclipsed by the pal-

try shows of earth, but which brings them near, and they stand before us distinct in outline, vivid in color, impressive by their transcendent magnitude and glory. When we have this faith, we will be awake, alert, energetic, thoughtful, tireless, full of wisdom to plan, and zeal to inspire, and strength to labor, and patience to persevere, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

2. Faith directs us how to work.

Faith is an inquirer. It asks with serious purpose, What shall I do to be saved? Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Faith is a docile disciple. It sits at the feet of the Master, and learns of him wisdom and salvation. Faith is a simple and submissive child. It hesitates not to do what our Father bids, and is confident that it will result as he has promised. Unbelief is self-conceited, self-willed, careless to be taught, and slow to obey. Hence unbelief sits still, ignorant what to do, or acts blindly, vainly, injuriously. But faith sees what is to be done and the means to accomplish it.

Unbelieving Cain brought to the altar of the fruit of the ground, and the Lord had no respect to him and his offering. By faith Abel offered of the firstlings of his flock, and he obtained witness that he was righteous. When the anger of the

Lord had burned against Israel because in unbelief they feared to pursue their march to the promised land and murmured that they were brought out of Egypt to be devoured by the tall sons of Anak, they mourned greatly, and in their rashness and impatience they resolved to move forward and assail their enemies, although they had no divine command, and Moses warned them that the Lord would not be among them; hence they were smitten and discomfited. Saul, when he saw the hosts of the Philistines daily gather strength, and Samuel the prophet delayed his coming, was afraid that Israel would scatter, and offered a burnt offering that he might precipitate the battle; but he that believeth maketh not haste, quietly waiting God's time. The same unbelieving and willful king, when he had smitten Amalek, spared Agag, and the best of the spoil, though God had devoted all to destruction; and he thought to propitiate the Lord by the sacrifice of the choice of the sheep and oxen unto him, as though God had as much pleasure in the fat of rams as in obedience. When David was bringing the ark of the covenant from the private house in which it had long rested to the city of Jerusalem, and the oxen stumbled, Uzzah presumptuously put forth his hand to steady it, as if the cause of God could ever need to be

supported by man's transgression ; and he perished. Naaman would gladly have paid a great price, and done some great thing, to be cured of his leprosy; if it must be by washing, he would have bathed in the clear waters of his own loved Damascus ; vain would have proved all this unbelieving work ; but faith dipped in Jordan, and the leprous flesh became clean and fresh as that of a little child. Paul bare the Jews " record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

In our day, there is much of hesitating, timid, languid, or else misdirected activity, from the want of faith. When churches corrupt the simplicity of the gospel with the traditions of men, or else with a vain philosophy, this is the fruit of unbelief. When they substitute ordinances for trust in Christ and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, this is unbelief. When they turn aside from the preaching of the cross to politics and science and human schemes, this is lack of faith in God. When they trust in music and architecture and culture and fashion, and perchance in worldly and sinful compliances, instead of trusting in the truth as it is in Jesus and

in the power of God, they show an evil heart of unbelief. When they have no heart to plan and give and labor for aggression on the kingdom of darkness and for conquest of the world in the name of Immanuel, this proves that faith is dying out. "Look to your marching orders," tersely replied the iron Duke of Wellington to the clergyman who spoke sneeringly of missions in India: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The loyal soldier asks only for the word of command, and stops not to theorize on the plan. Faith questions not the wisdom and efficacy of the means: a brazen serpent can heal the bitten Israelites, the blowing of rams' horns can cast down the walls of Jericho, the foolishness of preaching can save the world, if God so please. Faith is a coworker with God.

More faith we need, that our activity may be directed along the right lines. It will save us from a worldly policy, from the selfish and crooked ways in which unbelievers seek their ends. It will not wait to purchase or work out acceptance with God by our own legal deeds and outward forms, but receive the free gift of justification and eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. It will say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," and work

in harmony with God's methods and in simple, sure dependence on his grace.

3. Faith inspires a cheerful courage and enthusiasm in working.

Despair is death. To despair is to be sluggish and faint-hearted, and to suffer defeat. Faith is life, spirit, activity, strength, victory. Doubts are heavy, faith buoyant: Peter could no longer walk on the water when his faith began to fail. Before Gideon went against the host of Midian with only three hundred, the Lord gave him a sign of the coming triumph: secretly by night he entered the hostile camp, and listened to the soldiers' talk; and one said to another, "I dreamed that a barley cake came against a tent of Midian, and smote it that it fell; and his fellow answered, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon." Gideon then felt satisfied that the Lord had delivered into his hand the great army that lay in the valley like grasshoppers in multitude: an army expecting defeat is already beaten, and might as well be a host of grasshoppers. Faith nerves and braces, doubt relaxes the muscles and loosens the joints. Unbelief halts at the first difficulty, retreats at the first check, abandons the enterprise as a failure at the least delay; faith is hopeful and sure, summons all its strength, soon rallies after temporary disas-

ter, corrects its errors by the light of painful experience, never thinks of surrender, persists until victory sits upon its standard.

The perfect archer calls the deer his own,
While yet the shaft is whistling.

Faith depends not on its own sure aim and steady hand, but on the promise of God. Said the strippling David, smooth and fair and ruddy of cheek, to the braggart Goliath: “Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.” Little Faith could not deny that Canaan was a goodly land that flowed with milk and honey and abounded in fruit, but added that its cities were walled and its sons were giants, and dared not go up; but Great Faith was eager and bold, saying, “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” Their enemies mocked the few and feeble Jews who had returned from captivity and were attempting to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem; the weight of a fox, said they, will break down their stone wall; but the people had faith and a mind to work; and with a trowel in one hand and a spear in the other, they toiled on until the wall was completed.

Oh for the faith that foresees the success and the

victory, and brings them nigh ; that goes to the task and the battle with girt loins for hard work, but also with cheering shouts and joyous songs ; that cannot be discouraged nor depressed, and will not slack nor turn back, and is not whipped up by the scourge of conscience to attempt what it has no hope of accomplishing, and counts a little done in the name of Christ sufficient reason for much effort, but expects to do great things because of God's great grace, and is willing to suffer, and refuses not to die in the good cause !

4. Faith receives directly from God power to work.

I enter now distinctly the sphere of the supernatural. Rationalism disdains to hear of the miraculous, of divine intervention in the history of men. A religion without the immediate presence and working of God is a sham and a nullity. "I believe in the Holy Ghost." I believe in that power which brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, and which quickens to-day souls that are dead in trespasses and sins. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "When I am weak, then am I strong." The consciousness of our own weakness fits us to be vessels of the grace of God— instruments through whom God will work and be glorified. What the law could not do in that it was weak through our fleshly,

fallen nature, what all the philosophy and civilization and culture and reforms of the world cannot effect, is wrought by grace through faith. The dry bones live. Stones become sons of Abraham. The believer cannot live in sin, for to sin he is crucified, dead and buried. The believer fulfills righteousness, for he is born of God, and his seed remains in him, and the life which the Holy Ghost originates and nourishes puts forth itself with gladness and freedom in holy obedience and good works.

The power of God clothes the soul in response to the prayer of faith. He is inclined and enabled to work by this divine prompting and strength. He works out his own salvation with fear and trembling, because God works in him to will and do of his good pleasure; with the fear and trembling which come from a sense of the weighty responsibility and the infinite preciousness of the reception of divine grace, but also with the peace and transport of the assurance of the sufficiency of this grace. The more closely a man abides in Christ, the greater the power of fruitfulness he receives. We should wait on God patiently, earnestly, gladly, that we may have more and more of working power. This is the faith which removes mountains, overcomes the world, brings the body into subjection, purifies the heart, sanctifies the whole

life, converts all events into means of grace now and glory forever. "Not I, but the grace of God that is in me." "I live not, but Christ liveth in me."

This then is the blessed harmony and completeness of true religion—faith and the works of faith. Not the deeds of a self-righteous legality, but the acting forth of an evangelical trust in Jesus Christ our Lord and in the gift of life through him. Not works that are directed by our own wisdom and executed in our own strength, but a simple and full submission to God's will and following of God's plans and seeking of God's glory and assurance of God's blessing. A faith that works steadily and effectually, because God works in us and by us and through us. A faith that is in direct communion with God, and receives power moment by moment from this divine fountain, and uses this power unto its proper ends of holiness and loving labors. Faith the source, works the streams thence flowing; faith the sap, works the fruit into which it passes; faith the steam power, works the results to which it is applied. Have faith in God, and show your faith by your works, and let works react on faith to confirm and strengthen it, and let a life, consistent, consecrated, pure as God is pure, loving as Christ loved, and active in all deeds of piety and humanity, be the perfect consummation of your faith.

XII.

UNITY OF REVELATION.

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners [by divers portions and in divers manners—Revised Version] spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Hebrews i. 1-3.)

THE diversity of Scripture challenges attention. Thirty-nine portions, or books, make up the Old Testament. The writers varied in ability, temperament, and culture. I instance Moses, learned in all the wisdom of Egypt and mighty in words and in deeds; David, the flock-keeping, harp-playing lad who became king; Solomon, born to the throne, magnificent in his tastes, student, statesman, sage; Elijah, from the wild region of Gilead, a hairy man, with leathern girdle, sheep-skin cape, and blunt speech; Amos, a herdman and gatherer of sycamore fruit. They lived at widely different periods. Abraham was born two thousand years before Christ; no writing bears his name, but from his day interest centered in his

family and in the covenant which God made with him and his seed. Moses was born fifteen centuries before our Lord. David died a thousand years before our era. Isaiah prophesied three centuries, Malachi six centuries, later.

These dates mark different stages of civilization. We cannot, it is true, measure national progress by mere intervals of time. History, the record of change and largely of progress, moves one while swiftly, at another sluggishly; here it keeps the same direction, and there it winds without apparent law or aim, or even doubles on its course. But a vast diversity of physical, intellectual, and moral conditions is involved in the following historical pictures: The patriarchs, chiefs of the wilderness, wandering with flocks, herds, and servants from pasture ground to pasture ground, and dwelling in tents; the Hebrews in Egypt, first favored and thriving, afterwards enslaved and persecuted; the twelve tribes in Canaan, disunited, with no government, or loose government, at almost constant strife with neighboring or intermingled peoples, sometimes warring against one another; the nation organized under Saul, David, Solomon, and rent in twain under Rehoboam, Judah and Israel being thenceforth distinct, rival, and often hostile kingdoms; the captive Jews in Babylon; the rem-

nant returned to the Holy Land. What a contrast this whole stretch of time presents to the Augustan age, with its wide diffusion of Greek letters and Roman law, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea!

These writings differ, not only in authorship and dates of composition, but also in form and content. Genesis, after a brief history of the world from the creation to the confusion of tongues, consists of biographical sketches of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The other books of the Pentateuch tell the story of Israel's pilgrimage in the wilderness, and contain an extensive liturgy and code of statutes. Kings and Chronicles report successive reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel. Job is a sublime poem on Providence. David and others give us the Psalms. We owe to Solomon a song called by his name, a collection of Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, a treatise on the vanity of all things, with the moral, "Fear God, and keep his commandments." There are prophetic books, written before, during, and after the Captivity. Observe that there are no Institutes, as of Calvin or Watson, nor doctrinal treatise, nor formal creed, nor commentary on other portions of Holy Writ, nor harmony of the Scriptures.

The diversity is striking, but not less the one-

ness. This unity includes the New Testament. You may speak of the Scripture in the singular number or of the Scriptures in the plural; of the sixty-six books of the two Testaments or of the one Book, the BIBLE. But they constitute the one Revelation or Word of God to man; they bear a consistent testimony to the same truths—the truths whose direct, distinct, and complete manifestation is Christianity, the religion which, beyond comparison with other religions, commends itself to the reason, to the conscience, to all that is noble and worthy in the heart. There is one, and only one, adequate explanation of this unity: the Bible is a unit, because it has a single source, the changeless wisdom and purpose of God. God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, and at the end of those days has spoken unto us by his Son. There were many portions, many manners, many tongues, many pens, but one inspiration. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

That revelation was a gradual unfolding, an increasing illumination, I allow, or rather assert. My contention is that the Scriptures teach the same body of truths from Genesis to Apocalypse, whether dimly or effulgently, in figurative or plain

language, in type or antitype, in prophecy or fulfillment; and that the identity can be recognized.

We watch the bud tightly held in its green sheath, how it grows and swells, how its beautifully colored petals begin to peep forth, until it blooms into the full flower of the gospel.

Men in their carnality, in their spiritual obtuseness, required a long preparation for a clear and steady apprehension of the truth. The peculiar people of Jehovah were slow in grasping the fundamental truth of the divine unity and spirituality, though declared plainly, emphatically, repeatedly; down to the Captivity they often lapsed into the worship of images and of false gods, after the manner of the heathen—that is, of the whole world except this minute fraction, the children of Israel.

Moreover, many truths could not be explicitly taught in advance of historical facts with which they are closely connected: such as the call of Abraham and his seed to be the depository of the divine word and worship; the development of Israel into a people with their own laws, rulers, priests, and ceremonies; the establishment of David's kingdom and of the sacred city of Jerusalem, as types of the future kingdom and Church of God; and, above all, the Incarnation, the life of Christ among men; his sufferings, death, resurrec-

tion, and ascension ; his enthronement at the right hand of God, and his pouring forth of the Holy Ghost. A fully intelligible publication of the distinctive doctrines of Christianity was necessarily postponed until once at the end of the ages Christ should be manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. But these truths are the same, whether seen by starlight, or at break of day, or in the broad, direct shining of the Sun of righteousness.

To set forth, as far as it may be done in a single sermon, this unity of Revelation is the task which I have undertaken. Care is needed lest the presentation of the subject be too general to make any definite and convincing impression, or else so cumbered with a multiplicity of details as to weary and confuse. Happily, I can assume in my hearers such familiarity with the Scriptures that little more is required of me than to freshen your own recollections, and place in mass and order what may lie fragmentary in your minds.

Let me remind you, then, of the use which Jesus himself made of the Scriptures. Never man spoke with such authority and fullness of wisdom as he : “Verily, verily, I say unto you,” was his wonted preface. Yet to honor the written Word, to show that he came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law

and the prophets, and to refute his adversaries by an appeal to a standard of truth which they acknowledged, he frequently quoted the sacred volume. To say the least, Scripture lent itself readily to his high use; to speak more boldly, yet truly, it sustained the letter and the spirit of his teaching. When thrice tempted by Satan, he repelled his assaults by weapons drawn from the arsenal of Scripture, quoting apposite words from Deuteronomy: “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone;” “It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;” “It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” To Nathanael, the Israelite without guile, he affirmed himself to be the means of communication between heaven and earth, typified by Jacob’s ladder: “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” In the synagogue at Nazareth he read a prophecy of the Messiah from Isaiah, and interpreted it as fulfilled that day in their ears. The censure of the Pharisees because he ate with publicans and sinners he answered by showing from Hosea that a merciful spirit has higher value in the sight of God than forms of piety, which may cloak a proud heart: “But go ye and learn what that meaneth; I will have mercy, and not sacrifice:

for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He defended the children who shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" by asking, "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained praise?" To the rich young ruler, who inquired what good thing he should do that he might have eternal life, he quoted the ten commandments; to the question of the lawyer, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" he cited from Deuteronomy, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," as the first commandment, and from Leviticus, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," as next to it. He silenced the Sadducees concerning the resurrection by quoting from Exodus, "I am the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob," adding the comment, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." He silenced the Pharisees by putting to them a question on Psalm ex.: "How then doth David in the spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies my footstool? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?" They were not able to answer him a word. Paul gives us the solution: "Who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God, with

power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

I remind you also of the use which the Church makes of the Old Testament. In public worship lessons, stated or selected by the minister, are read from its various portions. It furnishes a large proportion of the texts on which sermons are based, not only to preachers who treat the text as a motto or delight in fanciful discourse, but to the soberest expositors. The short catechism and the bulky system of theology marshal their proof-texts gathered out of every sacred book. In private reading, likewise, all Scripture is found "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Even in the least promising portions there will often gleam upon the patient searcher a gem of divine wisdom more precious than acres of common earth or cases filled with manufactured jewels of human skill.

The Psalms deserve in this connection special notice. They are not only read by the minister, but chanted by the choir; versified, they are the only songs allowed in some Churches; more or less liberally paraphrased, they form a considerable part of our hymnals. They are a favorite portion of the Bible in the family and in the closet; in our devotions we quote its verses or weave its phrases,

consciously or unconsciously, into the texture of our prayer and praise. Whether we make our humble confession unto Almighty God, or pour forth our grateful heart in thanksgiving; whether out of the depths we lift our cry, or shout for joy because God defendeth us; whether we lay us down in peace, or meditate on God in the night watches, or awake early to speak or sing his praise; whether our cup runs over with blessing, or we walk through the valley of the shadow of death—we borrow from this Hebrew poetry fit expression of the deepest and highest, the strongest and holiest sentiments of the devout soul; and, after the example of our blessed Lord, our latest breath is well expended in uttering the words of David, “Into thine hand I commend my spirit.”

If it be objected that these facts prove only the faith of the Church in the whole volume of the Scriptures, I claim that they do more; that they show the basis of this faith in the actual agreement of all the diverse portions of the volume in teaching one wisdom and breathing one spirit. But I must go farther, and specify great and glorious truths of Christianity, which are witnessed by the historians, singers, and prophets of the old dispensation.

I begin with the doctrine of God, the one God,

the everlasting Spirit, of glory unsearchable in its perfection and infinitude, and yet revealed to men that they may adore and trust and serve him only. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” “created man in his own image;” noble opening of the Book. He declared himself to Abraham, “I am the Almighty God;” to Moses he revealed the deep meaning of his peculiar name, Jehovah, the I AM. He wrote upon the tables of stone: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.” Moses sang of him: “Even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” David dilated on his universal presence and wisdom: “Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. The darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day;

the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple: “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded!” Isaiah contrasts him with false gods: “Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.” The Levites in the time of Nehemiah addressed the Jews: “Stand up and bless the Lord your God forever and ever; and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host; the earth, and all things that are therein; the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshipeth thee.” This surely is the same God of whom John heard the voice of a great multitude proclaim, “Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!”

Separate mention should be made of the moral perfection, incapable of stain or dimming, which

the Scriptures everywhere ascribe to God. “Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders,” sang Israel at the Red Sea. The same strain was struck by grateful Hannah: “There is none holy as the Lord; for there is none beside thee; neither is there any rock like our God.” The seraphim of Isaiah’s vision cried one to another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” Revelation does not scruple to analyze this glory of holiness into its elements or phases. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” asked Abraham with reverent and believing boldness. Even Balaam testified: “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent.” He is described as faithful, keeping covenant and mercy. “He is the Rock; his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he.” To Moses, desiring to see his glory, Jehovah proclaimed: “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children unto the third and to the fourth generation.”

From the essential glory of God let us turn to his manifested glory as Creator and Ruler. The uniform teaching of the Book is that the one God is absolute and universal Maker, Preserver, and Lord. All matter, all life, and all spirit owe to him their origin, continuance, and powers, and are subject to his control. The heavens are the work of his fingers ; he is the Father of the spirits of all flesh ; the angels are his hosts. In the language of human philosophy, he is transcendent, not identified with nature as though it were a part or phase of his being, and yet immanent, for nothing exists apart from him ; but he is ever present in all his works, sustaining them and clothing them with their properties. He sendeth the springs into the valleys, watereth the hills from his chambers, causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, bringeth out the host of heaven by number, and calleth them by names, giveth breath unto the people upon the earth, and spirit to them that walk upon it.

Providence is a word very dear to the Christian heart, and I cannot name it without a rush into your memory of many passages from the Old Testament which set forth the doctrine it suggests with great richness and force. The difficulty is to select out of this abundance. I will indicate cer-

tain features of this truth which the Hebrew Scriptures teach. Providence is very comprehensive, and yet minute, covering the whole course of nature and the needs of all creatures. "Who provideth for the raven his food?" asks God in Job. Man, however, is the chief object of this oversight. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." Yet more special is this care over the righteous. "For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass him as with a shield." Providence is personal, involving thought, purpose, love. "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." "Like as a father pitieth his children;" "as one whom his mother comforteth." His eyes are upon the righteous, his ears are open to their cries. God permits, restrains, and overrules the acts of the wicked for his own glory and the welfare of his servants. Joseph said to his brethren: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Providence uses affliction as a wise and gracious discipline of his children, to humble, test, and chasten them. "Thou shalt also consider in thine heart that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth

thee." "Before I was afflicted I went astray ; but now have I kept thy word."

The parallel between the two economies is not less conspicuous in respect to the divine law of morals and worship. The same pure and lofty principles of morality are inculcated from first to last. The ten commandments do not lose their authority with the roll of centuries. In this closing decade of the nineteenth Christian century, and in this free and enlightened republic, there can be no better counsel for the choice of rulers than we read in Exodus : "Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness ;" nor better counsel to those in high places than we read in Deuteronomy : "Thou shalt not wrest judgment ; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift." Job, driven to self-vindication against false accusations which were not based on any testimony, but were inferred from his unexampled sufferings, described his own life : he had been chaste, making a covenant with his eyes lest they should entice him to sin ; had administered impartial justice, searching into every cause which he did not understand, and giving due weight to any complaint of manservant or maidservant against himself ; had not worshiped secretly the sun shining in his

strength nor the moon in her fairness, nor made gold his confidence; his doors had opened to the stranger, the fleece of his flock had clothed the naked; he had been a father to the orphan, and caused the widow's heart to sing for joy; he had not rejoiced at the destruction of an enemy, nor lifted up himself when evil found him, nor wished a curse to his soul. The Proverbs of Solomon are not shrewd maxims of worldly and selfish policy, but pearls and brilliants of piety and righteousness. They teach us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; that we should trust in the Lord with all the heart, and acknowledge him in all our ways, and that he will direct our steps; that the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow therewith. They warn against wine, gluttony, sloth, lust, vain ways of making money, withholding corn, oppressing the poor, and all manner of sin. They tell us that better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right; better a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith; better he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city; that a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches; that he that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given him will he pay him again. Moses sums up the whole duty

of man in loving obedience to God. "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul?"

At first glance you may see only contrast between the simplicity of Christian worship and the costly, burdensome, and mechanical ritual of the tabernacle and temple. But do not suppose that those were hollow forms. Listen to Samuel's rebuke of King Saul: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Listen to penitent David: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Read in Isaiah God's warning to Israel that oblations, incense, fasts, feasts, and many prayers were, so long as they lived in sin, but vanity and abomination. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall

be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The ceremonial law has been displaced by Christianity as hieroglyphics by the alphabet, and, like a promissory note after it has been paid, has ceased to be of value. It was not even the very image of good things to come, but only their shadow, as a circle is not the image but the symbol of eternity. It expressed needs which it could not supply, and prefigured the real satisfaction which is provided in Christ. It said to the anxious sinner, " My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering," ere yet it was revealed of what peerless worth that Lamb of God should be. The sin-laden people stood without the tabernacle, not daring to enter ; for it represented the dwelling place of Jehovah. Yet what resemblance, think you, did those scant rooms, the holy and the holy of holies, bear to heaven ? or what was the likeness of the cloud of incense above the golden lid of the ark to the glory of God's holiness and grace which it signified ? The blood of slain animals had no efficacy of itself, their life was no substitute for the life of guilty men ; but they pointed forward to the precious blood, the priceless offering of the Son of God. Who should go into the divine presence for those sinful men ? There was a family of priests,

one of them the high priest, sanctified to this office by washing and anointing and white vesture; but these rites could only in a figurative sense purify Aaron and his sons who shared the common guilt. Christ Jesus, the man of sorrows, the only-begotten of the Father, who knew no sin except in its burden which he bore for us, is the one Propitiation and Priest, the new and living and manifest way into the holiest place. The Mosaic ritual was an elaborate evangelical symbolism; Christianity is the key, the interpretation, the fulfillment. Without Christ it is a husk without fruit, a sign without significance, the letters of a word without meaning, an index without object at which to point, a shadow without substance. I bring it forward to-day as a witness for Christ. If it was dumb, its very dumbness was a sign; but now that the Child is born, its mouth is opened, and the word which it speaks is JESUS.

Do the Hebrew Scriptures support the Christian doctrine of the triune God, that the one God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? They do not contain such an explicit statement. It may well be inferred that before the incarnation of the Son and the baptism of the Spirit the human mind was incapable of receiving this profound mystery. We are now helped to conceive that in the God-

head there is an eternal, essential distinction expressed by those three names, since there have been made known the several offices which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit perform in human salvation; and looking back on the record from Genesis to Malachi, we see the suggestion of this distinction and of these offices, and a remarkable correspondence on this truth as on others between the language of the old covenant and that of the new.

You may remember that three visitants in human form appeared to Abraham before the destruction of Sodom, one of whom was the Lord, and the others were angels. There is nothing except the analogy of other divine manifestations to prove that this was not the Father, but the Son. In other passages, however, the angel of Jehovah is at once distinguished from the Lord by whom he was sent, and yet given the name, attributes, and honor which belong to God alone. The angel appeared to Hagar, "and she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me;" to Gideon, "and the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might." God said to Moses concerning this angel: "Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name

is in him." There are Psalms which we call Messianic because they were applied to Christ by himself and his apostles, and because no other person fully answers the description they contain. In the second Psalm God says: " Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." " Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee ; " he promises him the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, and warns the people : " Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." The forty-fifth Psalm touching the King, fairer than the children of men and blessed forever, thus addresses him : " Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever ; the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness ; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The child whom Isaiah describes can be no other than the Holy Child Jesus : " For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given ; and the government shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." From the same evangelical prophet we read : " Behold, my servant, whom I uphold ;

mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him. I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand and will keep thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." The fifty-third chapter reads more like a history of the crucifixion after the event than a prophecy, "Wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities," making his soul an offering for sin, bearing the sin of many.

The Old Testament makes frequent mention of the Spirit of the Lord. In some places these words might be satisfactorily construed to mean the divine power or energy. But if we compare all the passages in which they occur with the New Testament's teaching concerning the personality of the Spirit and his office to act on the soul—quicken-
ing, enlightening, purifying, strengthening, and comforting, and sometimes imparting miraculous gifts of healing, of tongues, and of prophecy—we must be impressed with the consistent usage of both volumes. In the first chapter of Genesis we read, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In the days of Noah the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

The Spirit of the Lord was given to Bezaleel that he might be wise to construct the tabernacle, was upon Othniel that he might deliver and judge Israel, came upon Gideon also, came mightily upon Samson. Later the Spirit of God came upon Saul in the gift of prophecy and to inspire his zeal and courage to save Jabesh-gilead. But when Saul had disappointed his early promise, and proved his unworthiness of the kingly office, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him; then Samuel anointed David, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. In the time of his sin and repentance the psalmist prayed: “Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.” Isaiah speaks historically of Israel’s ingratititude to their God and Saviour: “But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit;” prophetically more than once of the Holy Spirit as given to the Messiah: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek;” and also as poured upon the people of God: “For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” Ezekiel makes a like prom-

ise: "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." Joel's prophecy is very familiar because quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

Does the old covenant breathe any hope of the resurrection of the body and of the life everlasting? Our Saviour Jesus Christ "hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel." The dimmest planet differs not more from the broad and glowing orb of day than does the revelation of the heavenly life under the Mosaic dispensation from its revelation by the gospel. But the light is the same and from the same fountain, whether the rays came feebly by reflection in the nighttime of the earth or streams down directly and copiously from the risen Sun that makes this joyous evangelical day.

After all criticism, we can still quote at the burial of our dead the noble words of Job: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." If any object that the Authorized Version in supplying

the words “day,” “worms,” and “body” has altered the sense, let them follow the literal rendering of the Revision: “But I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand up at the last upon the earth; and after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” The clear faith and jubilant hope of the Christian delight to express themselves in the language of the Psalms: “Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.” The fullest and sublimest description of the resurrection is the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians; yet Paul reaches the climax in a quotation from Isaiah: “Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” How exultant are his challenge to our last foe and his assertion of triumph: “O death, where is thy

sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Compare Hosea in the Revised Version: “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O death, where are thy plagues? O grave, where is thy destruction?” Daniel may well close the testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures: “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.”

Though our Lord after his resurrection expounded to his disciples the Scriptures, saying, “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem;” though he bade them “go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;” and though Peter said in his sermon at Pentecost, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last

days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh ; ” nevertheless, Peter did not understand the breadth and freedom of the offer of grace, the call of the Gentiles to repentance and salvation on the same terms with the Jews, until he had received a specific revelation from God and had been sent to Cornelius and his house ; and not “ until God bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith,” did the Church accept this great truth. So difficult was it to lay hold on the abstract truth without a concrete case, to appreciate the prophecy before its fulfillment. And yet the proto-evangel, as it has been called, spoke not of a particular line, but of all the posterity of Eve : “ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Abraham was chosen to be the vehicle of the blessing of the covenant, but it was not limited to his descendants : “ And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” The Hebrew psalmist prayed : “ That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Oh, let the nations be glad, and sing for joy.” Isaiah foretold that Christ should be given “ for a light to the Gentiles and

salvation unto the end of the earth.” And Malachi, after whom the heart of prophecy was silent for four centuries, left on record the cheering assurance: “For from the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.”

That name is great among us to-day. In this new world of the setting sun incense and a pure offering are presented to the one true and living God through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear what prophets and righteous men during many ages longed in vain to see and hear. How exalted your privileges! how weighty your responsibility! Rejoice with trembling! “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” Personal acceptance of Christ as your Saviour is not your whole duty. You owe him loyal, whole-hearted service as your King, the King of kings and Lord of lords. You owe to mankind the extension of Christianity until it shall fill the whole earth with its light and blessing. To advance the kingdom of God here in your own land, and beyond this land everywhere, is the

highest obligation that can rest on you, the greatest good possible to the race. Pray and work, that in every place, from east to west, from north to south, men may know the true God and his Son whom he has sent, whom to know is life eternal.

THE END.

